TWO TREATISES:

THE FIRST Of FEAR,

FROM

Isa. 8. *v.*12, 13, *and part of the* 14.

THE SECOND, *The Righteous Man's Refuge* IN THE Evil Day.

From *Isaiah*, 26. *verse* 20.

By *John Flavell* Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON,
Printed by *H. H.* for *Robert Boulter*, at the *Turks head* in *Cornhill*. 1682.

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A

PRACTICAL TREATISE OF FEAR.

Wherein the various *Kinds*, *Uſes*, *Cauſes*, *Effects*, and *Remedies* thereof are diſtinctly opened and preſcribed, for the Relief and Encouragement of all thoſe that fear God in theſe Doubtful and Diſtracting Times.

By *John Flavell* Miniſter of the Goſpel.

Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, Be ſtrong, Fear not, behold your God will come with a vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and ſave you, Iſa. 35. v. 4.

Intellige in te eſſe etiam fortitudinem ſpiritus, quomodo & infirmitatem carnis, ac jam hinc ſcias quid unde facias, & quid cui ſubjicias, infirmum ſcilicet forti. Tertul. Adv. Gentes.

LONDON,
Printed by *H. H.* for *Robert Boulter*, at the *Turks head* in *Cornhill*. 1682.

A

PRACTICAL TREATISE

OF

FEAR.

To the

Right Worſhipful

Sir JOHN HARTOP,

Knight and Baronet.

Sir,

AMong all the Creatures God hath made (Devils only excepted) Man is the moſt apt and able to be his own tormentor; and of all the Scourges with which he laſheth and afflicteth both his Mind and Body, none is found ſo cruel and intolerable as his own fears. The worſe the times are like to be, the more need the mind hath of ſuccour and encouragement, to confirm and fortifie it for hard encounters, but from the worſt proſpect, Fear inflicts the deepeſt and moſt dangerous wounds upon the mind of man, cutting the very nerves of its paſſive fortitude and bearing ability.

The grief we suffer from Evil felt, would be light and ease, were it not incensed by Fear; Reason would do much, and Religion more, to demulce and lenifie our sorrows, did not Fear betray the succours of both. And it is from things to come *that this prospecting Creature raiseth up to himself vast Hopes, and Fears; If he have a fair and encouraging Prospect of Serene and prosperous days, from the* Scheme *and Position of second causes, Hope immediately fills his heart with chearinesse, and displaies the signals of it in his very face, answerable to that fair benign Aspect of things; but if the face of things to come be threatning and inauspicious, Fear gains the Ascendant over the mind, an unmanly and unchristian faintness pervades it, and among the many other mischiefs it inflicts, this is not the least; that it brings the evil of to morrow upon to day, and so makes the duties of to day wholly unserviceable to the evils of to morrow; which is much as if a man having an intricate and difficult business cut out for the next day, which requires the utmost intention both of his Mind and Body, and (haply might be prosperously managed if both were duly prepared) should lie all the night restless*

restless and disquieted about the event, torturing and spending himself with his own presaging Fears, so that when the day is come, and the business calls for him; his strength is no way equal to the burden of it, but he faints and fails under it.

There is indeed an excellent use that God makes of our Fears to stimulate our slothful hearts to greater vigilance, and preparation for evils, and there is a mischievous use Satan *makes of our Fears, to cast us under Despondency and unbecoming Pusillanimity; and I reckon it one of the great difficulties of Religion to cut by a thred here, and so to manage our selves under threatning or doubtful Providences, as to be touched with so much sense of those approaching evils, as may prepare us to bear them; and yet to enjoy that constancy and firmness of mind in the worst times, that may answer the excellent principles we are professedly governed by.*

These last times are certainly the most perillous times; great things are yet to be acted upon the Stage *of this World before it be taken down, and the* Scena antepenultima, *latter end, I say not the last,*

laſt, will be a Tragedy. *There is an* Ultima clades adhuc metuenda, *a diſmal ſlaughter of the Witneſſes of Chriſt, yet to be expected: the laſt bite of the cruel Beaſt will be deadly, and if we flatter not our ſelves, all things ſeem to be diſpoſing themſelves in the Courſe of Providence towards it.*

But Sir, if our Union with Chriſt be ſure in it ſelf, and ſure to us alſo; if Faith give us the daily viſions and Prælibations of the World to come, what well compoſed Spectators ſhall we be of theſe Tragedies! Let things be toſſed Suſque, deque, *and the Mountains caſt into the midſt of the Sea, yet then the aſſured Chriſtian may ſing his Song upon* Alamoth, Pſal. 46. *A Song compoſed for God's hidden ones. This ſo poiſeth and ſteddies the mind, that we may enjoy the comfort and tranquillity of a reſigned will, when others are at their wits end.*

With deſign to promote this bleſſed frame in my own and others hearts in theſe frightful times, I meditated, and now publiſh this ſmall Tract, to which a dear friend (from whom I have often had the fair

fair Idea *and Character of your excellent Spirit*) *hath occaſioned the prefixing of your worthy Name; I beg pardon for ſuch an unuſual preſumption, as alſo your charity in cenſuring the faults that will appear in it, when it ſhall come under ſo exact and judicious an eye; it may be uſeful, though it be not elegant; its ſeaſonableneſs is its beſt commendation, and its aim better than its performance. As for you Sir, I hope Faith hath really placed your Soul in that Serene and happy ſtation where* Seneca *fancied Moral Virtue to have placed a good man,* Fatendum eſt, cacumine Olympi conſtitutus, ſupra ventos & procellas, & omnes res humanas. *Above the Storms and Tempeſts of this unquiet and diſtracting World; but there are many gracious perſons, at this day, labouring under their own Fears, and whoſe hearts are ready to fail with looking for thoſe things that are coming to try them that dwell upon the Earth; and poſſibly ſomewhat of relief may be adminiſtred to many ſuch by this diſcourſe: Some bivious and ſtaggering Souls may be eſtabliſhed; ſome diſcouraged and fainting Spirits may be revived; ſome doubts may be diſſolved that have long perplexed gracious h[illegible]*

Wnat-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Whatever use it may be of to any, I humbly call in the aid of your Prayers to my own, for a special blessing upon it, and remains, Sir,

Yours to Honour,

Love and Serve you,

John Flavell.

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A PRACTICAL TREATISE OF Fear, &c.

Iſaiah 8. *v.* 12, 13, *and part of the* 14.

Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people ſhall ſay a confederacy; neither fear ye [*their fear*] *nor be afraid.* v. 13. *Sanctifie the Lord of hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread;* v. 14. *And he ſhall be for a ſanctuary.*

CHAP. I.

Wherein the Text and Context are opened, the Doctrines propounded; and the general method ſtated.

THere is not more diverſity found in the outward features, than in the inward tempers and diſpoſitions of men: ſome are as timorous as Hares and ſtart at every ſound, or yelp of a dog: others are bold as Lions, and can face dangers without trembling, Some fear more than they ought, and ſome before they ought, and others when they ought not at all. The carnal perſon fears man, not God; the ſtrong Chriſtian fears God,

not man; the weak Chriſtian fears man too much, and God too little.

There is a Fear which is the effect of ſin, ſpringing from guilt, and hurrying the ſoul into more guilt; and there is a fear which is the effect of grace, ſpringing from our love to God and his intereſt, and driving the ſoul to God in the way of duty. The leſs fear any man hath the more happineſs, except it be of that fear which is our happineſs and our excellency.

It cannot be ſaid of any man as it is ſaid of *Leviathan*, *Job* 41. 33. that he is made without fear, thoſe that have moſt fortitude, are not without ſome fears: And when the Church is in the ſtorms of perſecution, and almoſt covered with the waves, the ſtouteſt paſſengers in it may ſuffer as much from this boiſterous paſſion within, as from the Storm without; and all for want of throughly believing, or not ſeaſonably remembring, *That* the Lord High Admiral of all the Ocean, and Commander of all the winds is on board the Ship, to ſteer and to preſerve it in the ſtorm.

A pregnant inſtance hereof is furniſhed to our hands in this Context, where you find the beſt men trembling in expectation of the worſt events both on the Church in general, and themſelves in particular. *Their hearts were moved like the trees of the wood ſhaken with the wind*, *Chap.* 7. *v.* 2.

And indeed if their dangers were to be meaſured by ſenſe only, their fears were not above the value of the cauſe, yea their dangers ſeemed to exceed their fears; for it was the invaſion of a forein and cruel enemy, even the *Aſſyrian* who were to break in upon them like a breach of the Sea, and overflow the land of *Immanuel*, *v.* 7. *The Lord bringeth*

eth up upon them the waters of the river ſtrong and many; even the King of Aſſyria *and all his glory, and he ſhall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks.* And as the 7. *verſe* reſembles the enemy to waters which quickly drown the countrey into which they break, ſo the 8 *verſe* tells you how far they ſhould prevail, and how near it ſhould come to a general and total ruine. *He ſhall paſs through Judah, he ſhall overflow and go over, he ſhall reach even to the neck, and the ſtretching out of his wings ſhall fill the breadth of thy land O* Immanuel. All the body ſhould be under water, except the capital City, which remained above water.

Having thus deſcribed the power and ſucceſs of the invading enemy, in the 9 and 10 *verſes* he derides their plots and combinations, aſſuring them that although God for juſt and holy ends would permit them for a time to afflict his people, yet in the iſſue all their councels and cruelties ſhould recoyl upon themſelves, and end in their own ruine and confuſion.

And thereupon *Iſaiah* is commanded to encourage the feeble and trembling hearts of ſuch as feared God in thoſe diſtracted and frightful times, *v.* 11, 12, 13. *The Lord ſpake unto me with a ſtrong hand and inſtructed me, that I ſhould not walk in the way of this people, ſaying, ſay ye not a confederacy,* &c.

God ſpeaking to the Prophet by a ſtrong hand, imports the ſtrong and mighty impreſſion that was made upon his heart by the Spirit of Prophecy: Wherein the Lord did as it were lay his hand upon him, as a man doth upon one to whom he is about to impart ſome ſpecial ſecret in a familiar way, *q. d.* Come hither *Iſaiah*, (drawing him to him at the ſame inſtant with a friendly hand) take deep notice of what I am now to give thee in charge both with reſpect to thy ſelf, and my elect people that follow

thee; ſay not you a confederacy to all them to whom this people ſhall ſay a confederacy, (*i.e.*) let not theſe frightful tidings work upon you, as they do upon *Ahaz*, and the common multitude with him, who are ſo terrified and ſcared with the approching dangers that all their councels, thoughts and ſtudies are taken up in preventing it by making a confederacy or league with the *Aſſyrian*; or if that cannot be, then with ſome Forein power that may ſe-
Hoſ. 5. 13. cure them againſt the *Aſſyrian*, but their eyes are not all to me for protection and deliverance, they expect more from *Egypt* than from Heaven; from a broken reed, than from the rock of ages. Fear not you their fear; Their fear drives them from God to the creature; it firſt *Diſtracts* them, and then *Enſnares* them.

But on the contrary, ſee that thou, and all the faithful in the land with thee do ſanctifie me in your hearts, and make me your fear, and your dread. (*i.e.*) rely upon me by faith in this day of trouble, and ſee that you give me the glory of my wiſdom, power, and faithfulneſs; by relying intirely upon thoſe my attributes engaged for you in ſo many tried promiſes: And do not betake your ſelves to ſuch ſinful and vain ſhifts as thoſe do that have no intereſt in me, nor experience of me. This is the general ſcope and deſign of the Text; wherein more particularly you have,

1. An evil practice prohibited.
2. An effectual remedy preſcribed.
3 A ſingular encouragement to apply that remedy.

1. An evil practice prohibited, *Fear not their fear, neither be afraid.* This is that ſinful principle, which was but too apt to incline them to do as others did,

did, *ſcil.* to ſay a confederacy. Sinful fears are apt to drive the beſt men into ſinful compliances, and indirect ſhifts to help themſelves.

Their fear may be underſtood two ways;

1. Subjectively.
2. Effectively.

1. *Subjectively*, for the ſelf ſame fear wherewith the carnal and unbelieving *Jews* feared: a fear that enſlaved them in bondage of Spirit; a fear that is the fruit of ſin, a ſin in its own nature, the cauſe of much ſin to them, and a juſt puniſhment of God upon them for their other ſins.

2. *Effectively*, Let not your fear produce in you ſuch miſchievous effects as their fear doth; to make you forget God, magnifie the creature, prefer your own wits and policies to the Almighty power, and unſpotted faithfulneſs of God; if you ſay, but how ſhall we help it?

2. Why in the next place you have, An *Effectual remedy preſcribed, But ſanctifie the Lord of hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear and your dread.* The fear of God will ſwallow up the fear of Man, a reverential awe and dread of God will extinguiſh the ſlaviſh fear of the creature; as the Sun-ſhine puts out fire; or as one fire fetches out another: ſo will this fear fetch out that.

By ſanctifying the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, is meant a due aſcription of the glory of his Sovereign power, wiſdom and faithfulneſs, not only in verbal and profeſſed acknowledgments thereof, but eſpecially in thoſe internal acts of affiance, reſignation, and intire dependence on him, which as they are the choiceſt reſpects of the creature towards its God, and give him the greateſt glory, ſo they are certainly the moſt beneficial and comfortable acts we can perform for

our own peace and ſafety in times of danger.

If a man do really look to God in a day of trouble and fear, as to the *Lord of Hoſts*, (*i.e.*) one that governs all the creatures, and all their actions; at whoſe beck and command all the Armies of Heaven and Earth are; and then can rely upon the care and love of this God, as a child in danger of trouble repoſes on, and commits himſelf with greateſt confidence to the care and protection of his Father: O what peace, what reſt muſt neceſſarily follow upon this! Who would be afraid to paſs through the midſt of Armed Troops and Regiments, whilſt he knows that the General of that Army is his own Father? The more power this filial fear of God obtains in your hearts, the leſs will you dread the power of the Creature. When the *Dictator* ruled at *Rome*, then all other *Officers* ceaſed; and ſo in a great meaſure will all other fears where the fear of God is *Dictator* in the heart. This is the Remedy.

3. And to enable us to apply this remedy in the worſt and moſt difficult times, we have a ſingular *encouragement* propoſed. If we will thus ſanctifie the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, by ſuch an acknowledgment of, and child-like dependence on him in times of danger, then he will be to us for a *Sanctuary* (*i.e.*) he will ſurely protect, defend and provide for us in the worſt times and caſes, then will the Lord *Create upon every dwelling-place of mount* Zion *and upon her Aſſemblies, a cloud and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory ſhall be a defence, and there ſhall be a Tabernacle, for a ſhadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge and for a covert from the ſtorm, and from*

Aſyli loco.

Præſtabit vos inacceſſos, & inviolabiles ab his regibus.

from rain. Let the winds roar, the rain beat, the lightnings flash, you are in safety, and have a good roof over your heads. Hence these two points of Doctrine offer themselves.

1. *Doctrine.*

That the best men are too apt to be overcome with slavish fears in times of eminent distress and danger.

2. *Doctrine.*

That the fear of God is the most effectual means to extinguish the sinful fear of man, and to secure us from danger.

These two points take in the substance and scope of the Text, but because I design to treat in the following Chapters, of the *Kinds, Nature, Uses, Causes, Effects,* and *Remedies* of Fear, I shall not distinctly prosecute them, but proceed in this order in the following Chapters.

CHAP. II.

Wherein the kinds and nature of Fear are opened, and particularly the distracting slavish Fear of Creatures.

SECT. I.

THere is a threefold Fear found in men. *viz.*

1. Natural
2. Sinful } Fear.
3. Religious

1. Natural Fear, of which all are partakers that partake of the common nature, not one excepted.

Natural Fear is the trouble or perturbation of mind from the apprehenſion of approaching evil, or impending danger.

The Greek word φόϛ comes from a Verb that ſignifies Flight; this is not always ſinful, but it is always the fruit and conſequent of ſin. Since ſin entred into our nature there is no ſhaking off Fear, no ſooner had *Adam* tranſgreſſed, but he feared and fled, hiding himſelf among the Trees of the Garden, *Gen.* 3. 8. when he had tranſgreſſed the Covenant, he preſently feared the execution of the Curſe. Firſt he *eats*, then he *hides*. And this afflictive paſſion is from him tranſmitted and derived to all his children.

φέϛομαι *fugio, perfect. med.* πέφοβα, *inde* φόϛ *timor, fuga.*

To this natural Fear it pleaſed our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* to ſubject himſelf in the days of his fleſh, he was afraid, yea, he was ſore amazed. *Mark* 14. 33. For though his humane nature was abſolutely free from ſin, yet he came in the *likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*. *Rom.* 8. 3.

This fear creates great trouble and perturbation in the mind, 1 *John* 4. 18. *Fear hath torment*; in proportion to the danger is the fear, and in proportion to the fear, the trouble and diſtraction of the mind, if the fear be exceeding great, reaſon is diſplaced, and can conduct us no farther, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of Mariners in a Storm, *they are at their wits end*, *Pſal.* 107. 27. or as it is varied in the *Margin*, all wiſdom is ſwallowed up, and this is the meaning of *Deut.* 28. 25. that they ſhould go out againſt their enemies one way, and *flee before them ſeven ways*, (*i. e.*) ſo great ſhall be the fright and diſtraction that they ſhall attempt now

Rector in incerto eſt, nec quid fugiatve petatve, invenit. Ovid.

now one way, then another, ſtriving every way, but liking none; for fear ſo far betrays the ſuccours of reaſon, that their counſels are always in uncertainty and at a loſs, and the uſual voice of a man in this condition is, *I know not what to do, I know not which way to turn.*

pavidi ſemper conſilia in incerto.

Evil is the object of fear, and the greater the evil is, the ſtronger the fear muſt needs be, and therefore the terrours of an awakened and terrified conſcience muſt be allowed to be the greateſt of terrours, becauſe in that caſe a man hath to do with a great and terrible God, and is ſcared with apprehenſions of his infinite and eternal wrath: Than which no evil is or can be greater. You ſee at what height Chriſts conflict with it wrought, when it made him ſweat as it were great clots of bloud. Of all temporal evils death is the greateſt, and therefore *Job* calls it *the King of terrours*, *Job* 18. 14. or the moſt terrible of terribles. *Thuanus* relates two ſtrange inſtances of the fear of death, One of a certain Captain who was ſo terrified with the fear of death, that he poured out a kind of bloudy ſweat from all parts of his body. Another, is of a Young man condemned for a ſmall matter by *Sixtus Quintus* who was ſo vehemently terrified with the fears of death, that he ſhed a kind of bloudy tears. Theſe are ſtrange and terrible effects of fear, but vaſtly ſhort of what Chriſt felt and ſuffered, who grapled with a far greater evil than the Terrors of death, even the wrath of an incenſed God, poured out

Dux quidam indigno mortis metu, adeo concuſſus fuit, ut ſanguineum ſudarem toto corpore fudit. Hiſt. lib. 11.

Juvenis ob levem cauſam à Sixto V. damnatus, præ doloris vehementia fertur lacrymas cruentas fudiſſe. lib. 80.

out to the full, and that immediately upon him.

But yet evil, as evil, is rather the object of hatred, than of fear, it muſt be an imminent or near approaching evil, which we ſee not how to eſcape or put by, that provokes fear, and rouzes this Lion. And therefore the Saints in glory are perfectly freed from fear, becauſe they are out of the reach of all danger: Nor do we that are here in the midſt of evils fear them till we ſee them approching us, and we ſee not how to avoid them. To hear of Fire, Plague, or the Sword in the *Indies*, doth not affright us, becauſe the evil is ſo remote from us: It's far enough off, we are in no danger of it; but when it is in the Town, much more when within our own dwellings, we tremble. Evil hurts us not by a ſimple apprehenſion of its nature, but of its union; and all propinquity is a degree of union as Dr. *Reynolds*. a learned Divine ſpeaks. And its worth Obſervation that all carnal ſecurity is maintained by putting evils at a great diſtance from us. As it is noted of thoſe ſecure Senſualiſts *Amos* 6. 3. *they put far from them the evil day.* the meaning is not that they did, or could put the evil, one minute farther from them in reality, but only by imagination and fancy, they ſhut their own eyes and would not ſee it, leſt it ſhould give an unpleaſing interruption to their mirth; and this is the reaſon why death puts the living into no more fear, becauſe it is apprehended as remote, and at an undetermined diſtance, whereas if the preciſe time of death were known, eſpecially if that time were near, it would greatly ſcare and terrifie.

This is the nature of natural Fear, the infelicity of nature which we all groan under the effects of: It is in all the creatures in ſome degree, but among them

them all none ſuffer more by it than man, for hereby he becomes his own tormentor, nor is any torment greater than this when it prevails in an high degree upon us. Indeed all conſtitutions and tempers admit not the ſame degrees of fear, ſome are naturally couragious and ſtout like the *Lyon* for magnanimity and fortitude, others exceeding timorous and faint-hearted like the *Hare* or *Hart*, one little dog will make an hundred of them fear and flee before him. *Luther* was a man of great courage and preſence of mind in dangers, *Melanchon* very timorous and ſubject to deſpondency; thus the difference betwixt them is expreſſed in one of *Luther*'s Letters to him, "I am "well nigh a ſecure ſpectator of things, and eſteem "not any thing theſe fierce and threat-
"ning *Papiſts*. I much diſlike thoſe "anxious cares which as thou wri-
"teſt do almoſt conſume thee. There might be as great a ſtock of grace in one as in the other, but *Melanchon*'s grace had not the advantage of ſo ſtout and couragious a temper of body and mind as *Luther*'s had. Thus briefly of natural Fear.

Epiſt. ad Melanc. *An.* 1549.

SECT. II.

THere is a Fear which is formally and intrinſically ſinful, not only our infelicity, but our fault, not our ſimple affliction and burden, but our great evil and provocation; and ſuch is the fear here diſſuaded, called *Their Fear.* (*i. e.*) the fear wherewith carnal and unbelieving men do fear, when dangers threaten them; and the ſinfulneſs of it lies in five things.

1. In the ſpring and cauſe of it, which is unbelief, and an unworthy diſtruſt of God, when we dare not rely

rely upon the ſecurity of a divine promiſe, nor truſt to Gods protection in the way of our duty: This was the very caſe of that people, *Iſai.* 30. 15. *Thus ſaith the Lord, the holy one of Iſrael, in returning and reſt ſhall ye be ſaved, in quietneſs and in confidence ſhall be your ſtrength; and ye would not, but ye ſaid no, for we will flee upon horſes; therefore ſhall ye flee: and we will ride upon the ſwift; therefore ſhall they that purſue you be ſwift, one thouſand ſhall flee at the rebuke of one,* &c.

Thus ſtood the caſe, *Sennacherib* with a mighty Hoſt was ready to invade them, this puts them into a fright, in this diſtreſs God aſſures them by the mouth of the *Prophet*, That *in returning and reſt they ſhould be ſaved, in quietneſs and confidence ſhould be their ſtrength.* The meaning is, never perplex your ſelves with various councels and projects to ſecure your ſelves under the wings of *Egypt*, or any other *Protector*, but with a compoſed, quiet, and calm temper of mind reſt upon my power by faith, take my promiſes for your ſecurity, this ſhall be your ſalvation, and your ſtrength, more effectual to your preſervation, than Armies, Gariſons, or any creature defence in the World; one act of faith ſhall do you better ſervice than *Pharaoh* and all his forces can do.

But ye ſaid no, *q. d.* we dare not truſt to that, a good *horſe* will do us more ſervice at ſuch a time than a good *promiſe*; *Egypt* is a better ſecurity in their eye than *Heaven*. This is the fruit of groſs infidelity. And as wicked men do thus forſake God and cleave to the creature in time of trouble, ſo there is found a ſpice of this diſtruſtfulneſs of God producing fear and trouble in the beſt men. It was in the Diſciples themſelves, *Matth.* 8. 26. *Why are ye fearful O ye of little faith?* A Storm had befallen them at Sea, danger began to threaten them, and preſently you

find

find a storm within, their fears were more boisterous than the winds, and had more need of calming than the sea, and it was all from their unbelief, as Christ tells them; the less their faith, the greater their fear: If a man can but rely upon God in a promise, so far as he is enabled to believe, so far he will reckon himself well secured. *Illyricus* in his Catalogue of the witnesses relates this remarkable passage of one *Andreas Proles*, a godly aged Divine who lived somewhat before *Luther*, and taught many points soundly, according to his light then, he was called to a *Synod* at *Millain*, and afterwards in the *Lateran*, where opposing a proposition of the *Pope* about burdening the Church with a new Holiday, he was brought into much danger, and escaping very narrowly from *Rome*, he bought him a *Bow* and *Weapons*, but as he was riding, he began to bethink himself, That the cause was not *his* but *Gods*, and not to be maintained with sword and bow, and if it were, yet what could such a decrepit old man do with weapons? Upon which he threw away his weapons, committed himself, his cause, and his journey to God, relied upon his promises more than sword or bow, and came home safe, and afterward died quietly in his bed. Illyr. *Cat. Test. lib.* 19.

2 The sinfulness of Fear lies in the excess and immoderacy of it, when we fear more than we ought; for it may be truly said of our fears as the *Philosopher* speaks of waters, *difficilè suis terminis continentur*, 'tis hard to keep them within bounds, every bush is a Bear, every petty trouble puts us into a fright, our fear exceeds the value and merit of the cause. 'Tis a great sin to love or fear any creature above the rate of a creature, as if they were Masters of all our temporal and eternal comforts. Thus when the men of

Israel

Israel heard of the confederacy and conjunction of their enemies against them, the Text saith, *their hearts were moved, as the Trees of the wood are moved with the wind, Isai.* 7. 1. or as we use to say *proverbially*, like an *Aspine leaf:* 'tis a sad sight to behold men shaking and quivering as the trees do in a windy day, yet thus did the house of *David*, partly through the remembrance of past calamities, but especially through incredulity in Gods protecting care in their present and future dangers; yea, this is too often the fault of good men in creature fear, as well as in creature love, to transgress the due bounds of moderation. 'Tis noted of *Jacob* though a man of much Faith, and one that had the sweetest encouragements to strengthen it both from former experiences, and Gods gracious promises to be with him; yet when *Esau* was come nigh, he was *greatly afraid and distressed, Gen.* 32. 7. It was but a little before that God had graciously appeared to him, and sent a Royal guard of Angels to attend him, even two hosts or armies of Angels, *verse* 1, 2. and yet assoon as *Esau* approched him, he was afraid, greatly afraid, yea, greatly afraid and distressed, notwithstanding such an encouraging vision as this was.

3. The sinfulness of our Fears lies in the inordinacy of them; to fear it more than we ought is bad enough, but to magnifie its power above the power of a creature; to exalt the power of any creature by our fears, and give it such an Ascendent over us, as if it had an Arbitrary and absolute dominion over us, or over our comforts, to do with them what it pleased; this is to put the creature out of its own Class and rank, into the place of God, and is therefore a very sinful and evil fear.

To *trust* in any creature as if it had the power of a God

God to *help* us, or to *fear* any creature, as if it had the power of a God to *hurt* us, is exceeding ſinful, and highly provoking to God. This inordinate truſt is taxed and condemned in *Iſai.* 31. 3. They would needs go down to *Egypt* for help, and truſt in their horſes and horſemen, becauſe they were ſtrong (*i. e.*) in their opinion they were able to ſecure them againſt all thoſe dangers the Prophet from the Lords own mouth had threatned them with, but to take them off from this ſinful and inordinate dependence on the creature he tells them, *v.* 3. *Now the* Egyptians *are men and not God, and their horſes fleſh, and not ſpirit, when the Lord ſhall ſtretch forth his hand, both he that helpeth ſhall fall, and he that is holpen ſhall fall down; and they ſhall fail together*, q. d.

'Tis a ſinful and dangerous miſtake for one creature to give that truſt and dependence to another creature, which is due only to God, to look upon men as if they were Gods, and horſes as if they were Spirits: All creatures, even the ſtrongeſt, are but as the Hop, the Vine, or the Ivy, if they claſp about the pole, the wall, or the oak; they may be ſupported, as you alſo may by leaning upon God, but if they depend, and intangle themſelves one upon another, as you and the *Egyptians* do, you ſhall fail, and fall all together.

And as one creature is apt inordinately and ſinfully thus to truſt and lean upon another; ſo there is as great a proneſs in the creatures inordinately to fear and dread each other, as if the creature feared were rather a God, than a man, rather a Spirit than fleſh; and thus our fear magnifies and exalts the creature, and puts it as it were into the room and place of God. This was the ſin which God rebuked in his own people, *Iſai* 51. 12, 13. *I even I am he that comforteth thee, who*

who art thou, that thou ſhouldeſt be afraid of a man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man which ſhall be made as graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy maker, &c. See how fear exalts man, and depreſſeth God, it thinks upon the noxious power of men ſo much, that it forgets the ſaving power of God, as if that ſtood for nothing; thus a mortal worm that ſhall periſh as the graſs, eclipſes the glory of the great God, that ſtretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth.

And this was the evil againſt which Chriſt cautioned his own *Diſciples* in *Matth.* 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul; but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.* q. d. Have a care you never fear any man, be he armed with never ſo much power, and rage; as if the power of making or marring you for ever were in his hands, as if you lay at the feet of his will and pleaſure to be ſaved or ruined for ever. Fear not him that can only touch your bodies as if he would damn your ſouls, inveſt not any creature with the ſovereign and incommunicable power of God.

4. The ſinfulneſs of Fear conſiſts in the diſtracting influence it hath upon the hearts of men, whereby it diſcompoſeth and unfits them for the diſcharge of their duties.

Fear ſometimes puts men into ſuch an hurry, and their thoughts into ſuch diſorder, that for the preſent they have ſcarce any ſuccour or relief from their graces, or from their reaſon; for under an extraordinary fear both grace and reaſon like the wheels of a watch wound above its due height, ſtand ſtill, and have no motion at all. It is rare to find a man of that largeneſs and conſtancy of heart and mind in a day of fear, that was found in *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 *Chro.* 20. 2, 3.

Then

Then there came ſome that told Jehoſhaphat *ſaying, there cometh a great multitude againſt thee from beyond the ſea, on this ſide* Syria, *and behold they be in* Hazazon Tamar *which is* Engedi, *and* Jehoſhaphat *feared, and ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord.* He ſet himſelf *(i. e.)* he compoſed and fixed his heart for Prayer in the time of ſo great a fright, and terrible an Alarm: But it is rare to find ſuch conſtancy and eveneſs of mind as this; in like caſe it is with moſt in great frights, as the *Prophet* deſcribes the condition of the Jews, *Iſaiah* 22. 2, 3. when the City of *Jeruſalem* was beſieged and the enemy came under the walls of it; that which a little before was the *joyous City*, or as ſome read, the revelling City, is now in ſuch a panick fear, that it is full of ſtirs and tumults, ſome run up to the tops of the houſes either to hide or bewail themſelves, or take a view of the dreadful enemy without; others prevent the ſword of the enemy, and die by fear before hand, their own apprehenſions of miſery killed them before the ſword of any other enemy once touched them, but you read of none that ran into their cloſets to ſeek the Lord; the City was full of ſtirrs, but not of prayers; alas, Fear made them cry to the mountains, rather than to God, *ver.* 5. The beſt men find it hard to keep their thoughts from wandering and their minds from diſtraction in the greateſt calm of peace, but a thouſand times harder in the hurries and tumults of fear.

5. The ſinfulneſs of Fear conſiſts in the power it hath to diſpoſe and incline men to the uſe of ſinful means to put by their danger, and to caſt them into the hands and power of temptation. *The fear of man bringeth a ſnare, Prov.* 29. 25. or puts and lays a ſnare before him; Satan ſpreads the net, and Fear like the ſtalking horſe drives men right into it. It

was fear which drew *Abraham* that great believer into the snare of dissimulation, to the great disparagement of Religion, for it was somewhat an odd sight to see *Abimelech* an heathen so schooling an *Abraham* for it, as he did *Gen* 20. 9. And for the same evil you find God chiding his people in *Isaiah* 57. 11. *And of whom hast thou been afraid, or feared that thou hast lied, and hast not remembred me?* There is a double lie occasioned by Fear, one in *words*, another in *deeds:* Hypocrisie is a lie done, a practical lie, and our Church History abounds with sad examples of dissimulation through fear: 'tis Satans great engine to make his Tempations victorious and successful with men.

Sect. III.

3. There is an holy and laudable Fear, a Fear which is our *treasure*, not our *torment*, the chief ornament of the Soul, its beauty and perfection, not its infelicity or sin, *viz.* the awful filial fear of God; natural fear is a pure or simple passion of the Soul: Sinful fear is the disordered and corrupt passion of the soul; but this is the natural passion sanctified, and thereby changed and baptized into the name and nature of a Spiritual grace. This fear is also mentioned in my Text, and prescribed as an Antidote against sinful fears; it devours carnal fears as *Moses* serpent did those of the *Enchanters*. It's one of the sorest judgments to be in the fear of man day and night, *Deut.* 28. 65, 66, 67. and one of the sweetest mercies to be in the fear of God all the day long, *Prov.* 23. 17. The fear of men shortens our days, *Isaiah.* 22. 34. but the fear of the Lord prolongeth our days, *Prov.* 10. 27. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life

Prov.

Prov. 14. 27. But the fear of man a fountain of mischiefs and miseries. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil, *Prov.* 16. 6. but by the fear of man, men run themselves into evil *Prov.* 29. 25.

This Fear is *a gracious habit or principle planted by God in the soul, whereby the soul is kept under an holy awe of the eye of God, and from thence is inclined to perform and do what pleaseth him, and to shun and avoid whatsoever he forbids and hates.*

1. It is planted in the soul as a permanent and fixed habit, it is not of the natural growth and production of mans heart, but of supernatural infusion and implantation. *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will put my fear into their inward parts.* To fear man is natural, but to fear God is wholly supernatural.

2. This gracious fear puts the soul under the awe of Gods eye, *Psal.* 119. 161. *my heart standeth in awe of thy word.* 'Tis the reproach of the servants of men to be *eye-servants*, but it is the praise and honour of Gods servants to be so.

3. This respect to the eye of God inclines them to perform and do whatsoever pleaseth him, and is commanded by him; hence fearing God, and working righteousness are connected and linked together, *Acts* 10. 35. If we truly fear God, we dare not but do the things he commands, and if his fear be exalted in our hearts to an high degree, it will enable us to obey him in duties accompanied with deepest self denial, *Gen.* 22. 12. *Now I know thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*

4. This fear ingageth, and in some degree inableth the soul, in which it is to shun and avoid whatsoever is displeasing to God, and forbidden by him, in this *Job* discovered himself a true fearer of God, he would

not touch what God had forbidden, and therefore was honoured with this Excellent Character, *He was one that feared God and eschewed evil, Job.* 1. 3.

And thus of the several kinds of Fear.

CHAP. III.

Shewing the various uses of Fear, both Natural, Sinful, and Religious, in the Government of the world by providence.

SECT. I.

HAving taken a brief view of the several kinds and sorts of Fear that are found among men, our next work will be to open the Uses of them in the Government of this world, for one way or other they all subserve the most wise and holy purposes of God therein. And we will first enquire into

1. *The Use of Natural Fear.*

Which if we well consider, it will be found exceeding necessary and useful to make man a governable creature by Law, and consequently the order comfort and tranquillity of the world necessarily depends upon it. How immorigerous and intractable would the corruptions of mans nature make him, and uncapable of any moral restraint from the most flagitious and barbarous crimes, had not God planted such a passion as this in his nature, which like a * bridle curbs in the corrupt propensions thereof. If fear did not clap its manacles

* *Est timor instar freni quo equus regitur, hic metus si tolleretur, omnia concideren.* Lavat. in pro. 29. v. 25.

cles and fetters upon the wild and boyſterous luſts of men, they would certainly bear down all milder motives and break looſe from all ingenuous bands of reſtraint, the world would inevitably be filled with diſorders tumults, rapines, theft, murders, and all manner of uncleanneſs, and unrighteouſneſs, *nec hoſpes ab hoſpite tutus*, men would become like the fiſhes of the ſea, as the Prophet complains, *Habak.* 1. 14. where the greater ſwallow up a multitude of the ſmaller fry alive at one gulp; propriety could not be maintained in the world, no mans perſon could be ſafe or inviolate; power and opportunity to do miſchief would meaſure out to men their Lot and inheritance, and conſequently all Societies muſt disband and break up. We ſay, and the obſervation is ſure, he that fears not his own, may eaſily be maſter of another mans life. 'Tis law, and fear of puniſhment that keeps the World in order; men are afraid to do evil, becauſe they are afraid to ſuffer it, they ſee the Law hath inſeparably linked penal and moral evils together, if they will preſume upon the one, they muſt neceſſarily pull the other upon them too; and this keeps them in ſome order, and decorum; there would be no order or ſecurity without Law; but if Laws had no annexed penalties to inforce them and give them their Sanction as good there were no Laws; they would have no more power to reſtrain the corruptions of mens hearts, than the new cords or green withs had to bind *Samſon*; And yet if the ſevereſt penalties in the world,

Intellectualis creatura eò ipſo quòd creatura eſt, ſuperiorem habet, cujus providentiæ & ordinationi ſubjaceat: & qua intellectualis eſt capax eſt gubernationis moralis, qua dirigatur ad bonum, & arceatur à malo, & talis lex eſt illi ſimpliciter neceſſaria, ut convenienter ſuæ naturæ vivere poſſit. Suarez de leg. lib. 1 cap. 3.

were annexed to, or appointed by the Law, they could signifie nothing to the ends of Government without Fear. This is that tender sensible power or passion on which threatnings work, and so brings men under moral government and restraint, *Rom.* 13. 3, 4. *Magistrates are a terror to evil works; wilt thou not then be afraid of the power? but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain.* And by this means a world of evil is restrained and prevented in the world.

It was the custom and policy of the *Persians*, (I cannot say laudable) at the death of their Kings to give every man liberty for the space of five days to do what he would, and such mischiefs were done every where by the unbridled lusts of men in those days, that it made the people long and pray for the instalment of their next King, it exceedingly endeared Government to them: Blessed be God for Law and Government, for curbing by this means the raging lusts of the hearts of men, and procuring rest and comfort for us in the world this way.

2. *The Use of Sinful Fear.*

This is formally evil and sinful in its own nature, as well as the fruit of sin, and offspring of sinful nature, yet the Lord knows how to over-rule it in his providential Government of the world to his own wise and holy purposes, and he doth so;

First, by making it his scourge to punish his enemies. If men will not fear *God*, they shall fear *men*, yea, they shall be made a terrour to *themselves*. And indeed it is a dreadful punishment for God to deliver a man up into the hands of his own fears: I think there is scarce a greater torment to be found in the world, than

than for a man to be his own *Tormenter*, and his mind made a Rack, an Engine of torture to his Body, we read in 2 *Kings* 17. 25. that God ſent Lyons among the people, but certainly that is not ſo bad as for God to let looſe our own Fears upon us. No Lion is ſo cruel as this paſſion, and therefore *David* eſteemed it ſo great a deliverance to be delivered from all his fears, *Pſal.* 34. 4. It is a dreadful threatning which is recorded in *Deut.* 28. 65, 66, 67. againſt the diſobedient and rebellious, *Thou ſhalt find no eaſe, neither ſhall the ſole of thy foot have reſt, but the Lord ſhall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind, and thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and thou ſhalt fear day and night, and ſhalt have no aſſurance of thy life; in the morning thou ſhalt ſay, would God it were Even, and at Even thou ſhalt ſay would God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou ſhalt fear, and for the ſight of thine eyes which thou ſhalt ſee.* When fear hath once ſeized the heart, you may ſee deaths colours diſplayed in the face. What a diſmal life do they live, who have neither any peace by day, nor reſt by night, but weariſom days and nights are appointed to them. The days of ſuch men are tireſome days, they wiſh for the night hoping it may give them a little reſt, but their fears go to bed with them, their hearts pant, and meditate terrour, and then, O that it were day again.

2 By Fear God puniſheth his enemies in hell: It is that *flagellum Dei*, terrible ſcourge of God, by which a great part of the torment of the damned is inflicted on them. Divines uſe to make this tripartite diſtinction of hell torments, and tells us God puniſhes the wicked there partly by remembrance what is paſt, *viz.* the mercies and means they once had, but are

there irrecoverably loſt, partly by the ſenſe of things preſent, even the wrath of God overlaying ſoul and body, and partly by the fear of what is to come; and ſure this is not the leaſt part of the miſery of thoſe wretched caſt-aways: O that fearful expectation of fiery indignation! more and more of Gods wrath ſtill coming on as the waves of the Sea, thruſting forward one another: Yea, this is that which makes the Devils tremble, *James* 2. 19. Φρίσσουσι the word ſignifies ſuch a noiſe as the rote of the ſea, or the roaring of the waves when they break themſelves againſt the rocks, and this is occaſioned by the fears which are continually held as a whip over them.

Calamitoſus eſt animus futuri anxius, & ante miſerias miſer. Senec.

3 Providence makes uſe of the ſlaviſh fears and terrors of wicked men to diſſipate and ſcatter them when they are combined and confederated againſt the people of God; by theſe have they been routed and put to flight when there hath been no other viſible power to do it: It's ſaid, *Pſal.* 78. 55. God caſt out the Heathen before his people *Iſrael*; and by what means were thoſe mighty nations ſubdued? not by the ſtrength or multitudes of the *Iſraelites*, but by their own fears; for its ſaid, *Joſhuah* 24. 11, 12. *The Lord ſent the hornet before them, which drave them out.* Theſe *Hornets* were the fears and terrors of their own guilty and preſaging minds, which buzzed and ſmarmed in their own breaſts, and ſtung them to the heart, worſe than the ſwords of the *Iſraelites* could do. *Theodoret* relates a memorable ſtory of *Sapores* King of *Perſia* who

Crabrones per metaphoram repentinum terrorem ſignificant, qui in animos malè ſibi conſcios a Deo immiſſus fuit. Lavater in loc.

who had beſieged many Chriſtians in the City *Niſibis*, and put them to great ſtraits, ſo that little hopes of ſafety were left them, but in the depth of their diſtreſs God ſent an Army of Hornets and Gnats among their enemies, which got into the trunks of their Elephants and ears and noſtrils of their Horſes which ſo enraged them, that they brake their harneſs, caſt their Riders, and put them all to the rout; by which providence the Chriſtians eſcaped. Theſe *Hornets* were terrible to them, but Fears which are *Hornets* in a figure, are ten thouſand times more terrible; they will quell and ſink the very hearts of the ſtouteſt men, yea, they will quickly make thoſe, that in their pride and haughtineſs took themſelves rather to be Gods, and almighty Powers, to know themſelves to be but men, as it is, *Pſal.* 9. 20. *Put them in fear O Lord, that they may know themſelves to be but men*: One fright will ſcare them out of a thouſand fond conceits and idle dreams.

Sapores *Rex* Perſarum *cum urbem* Niſib *in qua erant Chriſtiani, obſedisſet, eamque affligeret, magna vis Crabronum, & Culicum repentè venit, & in Promuſcides cavas Elephantorum conſedit, complevitque aures Equorum, ita ut ſeſſores excuſſerint, & turbatos ordines in fugam converterint.* Hiſt. lib. 2. cap. 30.

3. *The uſe of Religious Fear.*

If God can make ſuch fruit to grow upon ſuch a bramble as the ſinful ſlaviſh fear of man is, what may we expect from Religious Fear, a choice root of his own ſpirits planting? The uſes and benefits hereof are innumerable, and ineſtimable, but I muſt contract and will only inſtance in three ſpecial uſes of it.

1. By this Fear the people of God are excited to,

and

and confirmed in the way of their duty. *Eccleſ.* 12. 13. *Fear God, and keep his commandments.* It is *Cuſtos utriuſque Tabulæ*, the keeper of both Tables; becauſe the duties of both Tables are influenced by it. 'Tis this Fear of God that makes us have a due reſpect to all his commands, and it is as powerful to confirm us in, as it is to excite us to our duties, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will put my fear into their inwards, and they ſhall not depart from me.* Look as he that ſoweth doth not regard the winds, but goes on in his labour whatever weather the face of Heaven threatens; ſo he that fears God will be found in the way of his duty, let the aſpect of the times be never ſo lowring and diſcouraging; and truly, this is no ſmall advantage in times of frights and diſtractions. Slaviſh fear ſets a man upon the Devils ground, Religious fear upon Gods ground; and how vaſt an odds is there in the choice of our ground, when we are to endure a great fight of affliction.

2. Another excellent uſe of this Fear, is to preſerve the purity and peace of our Conſciences, by preventing guilt, and grief therein, *Prov.* 16. 6. *The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil.* See how it kept *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 39. 9. and *Nehemiah*, *chap.* 5. 15. And this benefit is invaluable, eſpecially in a day of outward calamity and diſtreſs; look in what degree the fear of God prevails in our hearts, anſwerable thereunto will the ſerenity, peace, and quietneſs of our Conſciences be; and proportionable unto that will our ſtrength and comfort be in the evil day, and our courage and confidence to look dangers in the face.

3 To conclude, A principal uſe of this fear of God is to awaken us to make timely proviſions for future diſtreſſes, that whenſoever they come, they may

ay not come by way of surprize upon us. Thus *Noah*, being moved with fear, prepared an Ark, *Heb.* 11. 7. It was the instrument of his and his Families alvation. Some men owe their death to their fears, ut good men in a sense owe their lives to their fears; nful fears have slain some, and godly fears have saed others. *A wise man feareth, and departeth from vil,* (saith Solomon) *but a fool rageth and is confident.* His fears give him a timely Alarm before the nemy fall into his quarters and beat them up, by is means he hath time to get into his chambers of curity and rest, before the storm fall; but the fool ageth and is confident, he never fears till he begin o feel, yea, most times he is past all hope, before e begin to have any fears.

These are some of the uses God makes of the seveal kinds of Fear.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein the springs and causes of Sinful Fear are searched out, and the evil of such fears thence discovered.

SECT. I.

HAving shewn before the *Kinds* and uses of Fear, it remains that next we search out the springs om which these waters of *Marah* are derived, and d. And,

1. *Cause.*

First, we shall find the sinful fears of most good men

men to ſpring out of their ignorance, and the darkneſs of their own minds. All darkneſs diſpoſes to fear, but none like intellectual darkneſs, you read, *Cant.* 3. 8. how *Solomon*'s Life-guard had every man his ſword upon his thigh, *becauſe of fear in the night*: The night is the frightful ſeaſon in the dark, every *buſh* is a *bear*, we ſometimes ſmile by day, to ſee what ſilly things thoſe were that ſcared us in the night; ſo it is here, were our judgment but duly informed, how ſoon would our hearts be quieted?

Now there is a five fold Ignorance out of which our fears are generated.

1 Ignorance of God, either we know not, or at leaſt, duly conſider not his Almighty power, vigilant care, unſpotted faithfulneſs, and how they are all engaged by Covenant for his people: This ignorance and inconſiderateneſs lay at the root of their fears, *Iſai.* 40. 27, 28. *My way*, (ſaith Sion) *is hid from the Lord, and my judgment paſſed over from my God*, words imparting a ſuſpicion that God had left her out of the account of his providence, and the Catalogue of thoſe whom he would look after and take care for.

But were it once throughly underſtood and believed what power there is in Gods hand to defend us, what tenderneſs in his bowels to commiſerate us, what faithfulneſs in all the promiſes in which they are made over to us, O how quiet and calm would our hearts be! Our courage would quickly up, and our fears down.

2. Our ignorance of men generates our fears of men, we fear them, becauſe we do not know them; if we underſtood them better, we would fear them leſs, we over-value them, and then fright at them. They ſay the Lion is painted more fierce than he is

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I am ſure our fancy paints out man more dreadful than indeed he is. If wicked men, eſpecially if multitudes of wicked men be confederated againſt us, our hearts quail, and preſently apprehend inevitable ruine. *The floods of the ungodly made me afraid*, ſaith *David*, (*i. e.*) the multitudes of them, which he thought like a flood or mighty torrent of waters, muſt needs ſweep away ſuch a ſtraw, ſuch a feather as he was before them; but mean time we know or conſider not that they have no power againſt us, but what is given them from above, and that it's uſual with God to cramp their hands, and clap on the bands of reſtraint upon them when their hearts are fully ſet in them to do miſchief; did we ſee and conſider them as they are in the hand of our God, we ſhould not tremble at them as we do.

3. Ignorance of *our ſelves*, and the relations we have to God, creates ſlaviſh fears in our hearts. For did believers but throughly underſtand how dear they are to God, what relations they ſuſtain to him, of what account and value they are in his eyes, and how well they are ſecured by his faithful promiſes and gracious preſence, they would not ſtart and tremble at every noiſe, and appearance of danger as they do. God reckoned it enough to cure all *Abraham*'s ſinful fears when he told him how his God ſtood engaged for his defence, *Gen.* 15. 1. *Fear not* Abraham, *I am thy ſhield.* *Iſai.* 51. 12.

And noble *Nehemiah* valued himſelf in times of danger and fear by his intereſt in God, as his words import, *Nehem.* 6. 11. the conſpiracy againſt him was ſtrong, the danger he and the faithful with him at that time were in, was extraordinary, ſome therefore adviſed to flee to the *Temple*, and Barracado them-

themſelves there againſt the Enemy, but *Nehemiah* underſtood himſelf better, *Should ſuch a man as I flee? And who being as I am, would flee?* ſaith he, *q. d.* a man ſo called of God to this ſervice, a man under ſuch promiſes, a man of ſuch manifold and manifeſt experiences; ſhould ſuch a man flee? Let others who have no ſuch encouragements flee if they will, for my part I will not flee. I remember it was an argument uſed by *Tertullian* to quiet the fears, and ſtay the flight of Chriſtians in thoſe bloudy times: Art thou afraid of a man, O Chriſtian, when devils are afraid of thee, as a *Priſoner* is of his Judge, of whom the whole world ought to fear, as being one that ſhall judge the world: O that we could without pride and vanity but value our ſelves duly, according to our Chriſtian dignities, and priviledges which if ever it be neceſſary to count over and value, it is in ſuch times of danger and fear, when the heart is ſo prone to dejection and ſinking fears.

Tertul. *de fuga. Times hominem Chriſtiane, quem timeri oportet ab Angelis, Siquidem Angelos judicaturus es: quem timeri oportet à Demoniis, ſiquidem & in Demoniis, accepiſti poteſtatem: quem timeri oportet ab univerſo mundo, ſiquidem & in te mundus judicatur.*

4. Ignorance of our dangers and troubles cauſe our frights and terrours, we miſtake them, and therefore fright at them; we are ignorant of two things in our troubles among others. *viz.*

1. The comforts that are in them.
2. The outlets and eſcapes from them.

There is a vaſt odds betwixt the outward appearance and face of trouble and the inſide of it; 'tis a Lion to the eye at a diſtance, but open it, and there is honey in its belly. *Paul* and *Silas* met that in a priſon that made them ſing at midnight, and ſo have many more ſince their day.

And

And as we are ignorant of the comforts that are ſometimes found in our troubles, ſo of the outlets and doors of eſcape God can, and often doth open out of trouble; *To God the Lord belong the iſſues from death, Pſal.* 68. 20. *he knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptation,* 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. he can with every temptation make away to eſcape, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. the poor captive exile caſt upon nothing but dying in the pit, making their graves in the land of their captivity, *Iſai.* 51. 14. For they could think upon none but the uſual methods of deliverance, power, or price, and they had neither; little did they dream of ſuch immediate influences of God upon the Kings heart, to make him diſmiſs them freely contrary to all rules of State policy, *Iſai.* 45. 13.

5. But eſpecially the fears of good men ariſe out of their ignorance and inconſiderateneſs of the *Covenant of Grace.* If we were better acquainted with the nature, extent, and ſtability of the Covenant, our hearts would be much freed thereby from theſe tormenting paſſions, this Covenant would be a *Panacea*, a univerſal remedy againſt all our fears, upon ſpiritual or temporal accounts, as will be made evident hereafter in this diſcourſe.

2. *Cauſe.*

2. Another cauſe and fountain of Sinful Fear, is guilt upon the Conſcience: A ſervant of ſin cannot but firſt or laſt be a ſlave of Fear, and they that have done evil, cannot chuſe but expect evil, no ſooner had *Adam* defiled and wounded his Conſcience with guilt, but he preſently trembles and hides himſelf, ſo it is with his children, God calls to him not in a threatning, but gentle dialect, not in a tempeſt, but in the cool of the day, yet it terrifies him, there being in himſelf *mens conſcia facti*, a guilty and condemning

demning Conſcience, *Gen.* 3. 8. 'Tis *Seneca*'s obſervation, That a guilty Conſcience is a terrible whip and torment to the Sinner, perpetually laſhing him with ſolicitous thoughts and fears, that he knows not where to be ſecure, nor dare he truſt to any promiſes of protection, but diſtruſts all, doubts and jealouzeh all; of ſuch it is ſaid, *Job* 15. 21. That *a dreadful ſound is in their ears*, noting not only the effects of real, but alſo of imaginary dangers, his own preſaging mind and troubled fancy ſcares him where no real danger is, ſuitable to that *Pro.* 28. 1. *The wicked fleeth when none purſues, but the righteous is bold as a Lion*, juſt as they ſay of ſheep, that they are affrighted by the clattering of their own feet, when once they are ſet a running; ſo is the guilty Sinner with the noiſe of his own Conſcience which ſounds nothing in his ears, but miſery, wrath, and hell; we may ſay of all wicked men in their frights as *Tacitus* doth of *Tyrants* that if it were poſſible to open their inſide, their mind, and conſcience, many terrible ſtripes and wounds would be found there; and it's ſaid, *Iſai.* 33. 14. The ſinners in *Sion* are afraid trembling taketh hold on the hypocrite fear; and trembling as naturally ariſeth out of guilt, as the ſparks do out of a fiery charcoal, Hiſtories abundantly furniſh us with ſad examples of the truth of this obſervation. *Catiline* that monſter of wickedneſs would ſtart at any ſuddain noiſe, being haunted with the furies of his own evil conſcience. *Charles* the IX. after his bloudy and

Malè facinorum conſcientiæ flagellari, & plurimum illi tormentorum eſſe, eo quod perpetuo illam ſolicitudo urget, ac verberat quod ſponſoribus ſecuritatis ſuæ non poteſt credere. Senec. Epiſt. 97.

Si recludantur mentes Tyrannorum poſſe aſpici laniatus & ictus. Annal.

and barbarous Maſſacre of the Proteſtants, could neither ſleep nor wake without muſick to divert his thoughts. And our *Richard* the Third after the murther of his two innocent Nephews, ſaw divers images or ſhapes like Devils in his ſleep, pulling and haling him. Mr. *Ward* tells of a *Jeſuit* in *Lancaſhire* who being followed by one that had found his Glove, out of no other deſign but to reſtore it to him, but being purſued by his own guilty Conſcience alſo, he leaped over the next hedge and was drowned. And remarkable is that which Mr. *Fox* relates of *Cardinal Creſentius* who fancied the devil walking in his chamber, and ſometimes couching under his Table as he was writing Letters to *Rome* againſt the Proteſtants. *Impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit*, ſo much miſchief as Conſcience tells them they have done, ſo much it bids them expect. *Wolfius* tells us of one *John Hofmeiſter* who fell ſick with the very terrours of his own Conſcience in his Inn, as he was travelling towards *Auſpurge* in *Germany*, and was frighted by his own Conſcience to that degree that they were fain to bind him in his bed with chains, and all that they could get from him was, I am caſt away for ever, I have grievouſly wounded my own Conſcience.

To this wounded and trembling conſcience is oppoſed *the ſpirit of a ſound mind*, mentioned 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. *God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a ſound mind*; A ſound mind, is in this place the ſame thing with a pure and peaceable Conſcience, a mind or Conſcience not infirmed or wounded with guilt, as we ſay a ſound or heal body which hath no diſeaſe to infirm it, ſuch a mind is oppoſed to the ſpirit of fear; it will make a man bold as a Lion; *Nil conſcire tibi, nullâ Palleſcere culpâ, hic murus aheneus eſto*——

An evil and guilty Conſcience foments fears and terrours three ways.

1. by aggravating ſmall matters and blowing them up to the height of the moſt fatal and deſtructive evils; ſo it was with *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 14. *Every one that meets me will ſlay me.* Now every child was a *Giant* in his eye, and any body he met, his over-match. A guilty Conſcience gives a man no ſight of his enemy, but through a magnifying, or a multiplying glaſs.

2. It begets Fears, by interpreting all doubtful caſes in the worſt ſenſe that can befaſtened upon them; *Peſſimus in dubiis Augur timor.* If the *Swallows* do but chatter in the chimney, *Beſſus* interprets it to be a diſcovery of his crime, that they are telling tales of him, and ſaying, *Beſſus* killed a man. Nay,

3 If a guilty Conſcience have nothing to aggravate and magnifie, nor any doubtful matter to interpret in a frightful ſenſe, it can and often doth create fears and terrors out of nothing at all: the rules of Fear are not like the rules in *Arithmetick* where many no things make nothing, but fear can make ſomething out of nothing, yea, many things and great things out of nothing at all. *Pſal.* 53, 5. *there were they in great fear where no fear was*; here was a great fear raiſed or created out of nothing at all had their fear been examined, and hunted home to its original, it would have been found a pure creature of fancy, a *Chimæra* having no *fundamentum in re*, no other foundation but troubled fancy, and a guilty Conſcience; thus it was with *Paſhur*, he was a very wicked man, and a bitter enemy to the *Prophet Jeremy*, and if there be none to fright and terrifie from abroad, rather than he ſhall want

in metu & periculo plura & majora videntur metuentibus, cum creduntur facilius, tum finguntur impunius. Cicero.

want it, he shall be a terror to himself, *Jer.* 20. 3, 4. he was his own bugbear, afraid of his own shadow; and truly this is a great plague and misery; he that is a terror to himself, can no more flee from terrors than he can flee from himself. O the efficacy of Conscience! how doth it arrest the stoutest sinners, and make them tremble, when there is no visible external cause of fear! *Nemo se judice, nocens absolvitur.*

1. *Object.* But may not a good man whose sins are pardoned be affrighted with his own fancies, and scared with his own imaginations?

Sol. No doubt he may, for there is a twofold fountain of fears, one in the body, another in the soul, one in the constitution, another in the conscience; it is the affliction and infelicity of many pardoned and gracious souls to be united and married to such distempered and ill habited bodies as shall afflict them without any real cause from within, and wound them by their own diseases and distempers, and these wounds can no more be prevented or cured by their reason or Religion, than any other bodily disease suppose an Ague or a Feaver can be so cured. Thus Physicians tell us when adust choler and melancholy overflows and abounds in the body, as in the Hypochondriacal distemper, *&c.* what sad effects it hath upon the mind as well as upon the body, there is not only a sad and fearful aspect or countenance without, but sorrow, fear and afflicting thoughts within; this is a sore affliction to many good men whose Consciences are sprinkled with the bloud of Christ from guilt, but yet God

Fernel. Pathol. *lib.* 2. *c.* 16. *Corporis habitus siccus & macilentus, aspectus inconstans, horridus ac mœstus, in morbis animi metus & mœstitia, taciturnitas, solitudo, inanis rerum commentatio somnus turbulentus, horrendis insomniis fluctuans, & agitatus spectris rerum nigrarum, &c.*

ſees good to clog them with ſuch afflictions as this for their humiliation, and for the prevention of worſe evils.

2. *Object.* But many bold and daring ſinners are found, who notwithſtanding all the guilt with which their conſciences are loaded, can look dangers in the face without trembling, yea, they can look death it ſelf the King of terrors in the face, with leſs fear than better men.

Sol. True, but the reaſon of that is from a ſpiritual judgment of God upon their hearts and conſciences, whereby they are hardened, and ſeared as with an hot iron, 2. *Tim.* 4. 2. and ſo Conſcience is diſabled for the preſent, to do its office, it cannot put forth its efficacy and activity now, when it might be uſeful to their ſalvation, but it will do it to purpoſe hereafter when their caſe ſhall be remedileſs.

3. *Cauſe.*

3. We ſee what a forge of Fears a guilty Conſcience is, and no leſs is the ſin of *Unbelief*, the real and proper cauſe of moſt diſtracting and afflictive fears; ſo much as our Souls are empty of *faith*, they are in times of trouble filled with *fear*: We read of ſome that have died by no other hand but their own fears; but we never read of any that died by fear, who were once brought to live by faith: If men would but dig to the root of their fears, they ſhould certainly find unbelief there, *Matth.* 8. 26. *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* The leſs faith ſtill the more fear: Fear is generated by unbelief, and unbelief ſtrengthened by fear, as in nature there is an obſervable κυκλογένεσις circular generation, vapours beget ſhowers, and ſhowers new vapours; ſo it is in things moral, and therefore all the skill in the world can never cure us of the diſeaſe of fear, till God firſt cure us of our unbe-

lief:

lief: Chriſt therefore took the right method, to rid the diſciples of their fear, by rebuking their unbelief. The remains of this ſin in Gods own people is the cauſe and fountain of their fears, and more particularly to ſhew how fear is generated by unbelief, let a few particulars be heedfully adverted.

1. Unbelief weakens and ſtumbles the aſſenting act of Faith, and thereby cuts off from the ſoul in a great meaſure its principal relief againſt dangers and troubles. It is the uſe and office of Faith to reallize to the Soul the inviſible things of the world to come, and thereby encourage it againſt the fears and dangers of the preſent world: Thus *Moſes forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King, for he endured, as ſeeing him that is inviſible*, *Heb.* 11. 27. If this aſſenting act of Faith be weakned or ſtaggered in the ſoul, if once inviſibles ſeem uncertainties, and viſibles the only realities, no wonder we are ſo ſcared and frighted when theſe viſible and ſenſible comforts are expoſed and endangered, as they often are, and will be in this mutable world. That man muſt needs be afraid to ſtand his ground, that is not throughly perſwaded the ground he ſtands on is firm and good; 'tis not to be wondred that men ſhould tremble, who ſeem to feel the ground ſhake and reel under them.

2. Unbelief ſhuts up the refuges of the Soul in the Divine promiſes, and by leaving it without thoſe refuges, muſt needs leave it in the hands of fears and terrors. That which fortifies and emboldens a Chriſtian in evil times, is his dependence upon God for protection, *Pſal.* 143. 9. *I flie unto thee to hide me.* The cutting off of this retreat (which nothing but unbelief can do) deprives the ſoul of all thoſe ſuccours and ſupports

multa fidem promiſſa levant.

which the promiſes afford, and conſequently fills the heart with anxiety and fear.

3. Unbelief makes men negligent and careleſs in providing for troubles before they come, and ſo brings them by way of ſurprize upon them, and the more ſurprizing any evil is, the more frightful it is always found to be; we cannot think that *Noah* was ſo affrighted at the Flood when it began to ſwell above all the hills and mountains as all the reſt of the world was, nor was there any reaſon that he ſhould, having foreſeen it by Faith, and made proviſion for it, *Heb.* 11. 7. *By faith* Noah *being warned of God, prepared an Ark.* *Auguſtine* relates a very pertinent and memorable ſtory of *Paulinus* Biſhop of *Nola*, who was a very rich man, both in goods and grace, he had much of the world in his *hands*, but little of it in his *heart*, and it was well there was not; for the *Goths* a barbarous people breaking into that City, like ſo many Devils fell upon the prey, thoſe that truſted to the treaſures which they had, were deceived and ruined by them; for the rich were put to tortures to confeſs where they had hid their moneys: This good *Biſhop* fell into their hands and loſt all he had, but was ſcarce moved at the loſs, as appears by his prayer which my *Author* relates thus, *Lord let me not be troubled for my gold and ſilver, thou knoweſt it is not my treaſure, that I have laid up in heaven, according to thy command. I was warned of this judgment before it came, and provided for it, and where all my intereſt lies. Lord thou knoweſt.*

Auguſt. *de civit. Dei, lib.* 1. *c.* 10.

Thus Mr. *Bradford*, when the *Keepers* wife came running into his Chamber ſuddenly, with words able to have put the moſt men in the world into a trembling poſture, O Mr. *Bradford*, I bring you heavy tidings

dings, to morrow you muſt be burned, and your chain is now buying; he put off his hat and ſaid, *Lord I thank thee I have looked for this a great while, it is not terrible to me, God make me worthy of ſuch a mercy*, ſee the benefit of a proſpect of, and preparation for ſufferings.

4. Unbelief leaves our deareſt intereſts and concerns in our own hands, it commits nothing to God, and conſequently muſt needs fill the heart with diſtracting fears when eminent dangers threaten us. Reader, if this be thy caſe, thou wilt be a *Magor miſſabib* ſurrounded with terrours, whenſoever thou ſhalt be ſurrounded with dangers and troubles. Believers in this as well as in many other things have the advantage of thee, that they have committed all that is precious and valuable to them, into the hands of God by Faith, to him they have committed the keeping of their ſouls, 1 Pet. 4. 19. and all their eternal concernments, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. And theſe being put into ſafe hands, they are not diſtracted with fears about other matters of leſs value, but can truſt them where they have intruſted the greater, and enjoy the quietneſs and peace of a reſigned Soul to God, *Prov.* 16. 3. but as for thee, thy life, thy liberty, yea, which is infinitely more than all theſe things, thy Soul will lie upon thy hands in the day of trouble, and thou wilt not know what to do with them, nor which way to diſpoſe of them; O theſe be the dreadful ſtreights and frights that unbelief leaves men in, 'tis a fountain of Fears, and diſtractions. And indeed it cannot but diſtract and confound carnal men in whom it reigns and is in its full ſtrength, when ſad experience ſhews us what fears and tremblings the very remains and relicts of this ſin begets in the beſt men, who are not fully freed from it. If the unpurged re-

licts of unbelief in them, can thus darken and cloud their evidences, thus greaten and multiply their dangers, if it can draw ſuch ſad and frightful concluſions in their hearts, notwithſtanding all the contrary experiences of their lives, as we ſee in that ſad inſtance, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. What panick fears, and unrelieved terrors muſt it put thoſe men under, where it is in its full ſtrength and dominion.

4. *Cauſe.*

Moreover, we ſhall find many of our Fears raiſed and provoked in us by the *Promiſcuous adminiſtrations* of providence in this world, when we read in Scripture, That *There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, and all things come alike to all, Eccleſ.* 9. 2. That when the ſword is drawn, God ſuffers it to cut off the righteous and the wicked, *Ezek.* 21. 3. The Sword makes no difference, where God hath made ſo great a difference by grace, it neither diſtinguiſhes faces, nor breaſts, but is aſſoon ſheathed in the bowels of the beſt, as of the worſt of men; when we read how the ſame fire of Gods indignation, devours the green tree and the dry tree, *Ezek.* 20. 47. How the basket of good figs (the Embleme of the beſt men of thoſe times) were carried into *Babylon* as well as the bad, *Jer.* 24. 5. How the fleſh of Gods Saints hath been given for meat to the fowls of heaven, and to the beaſts of the field, *Pſal.* 97. 12. and how the wicked have devoured the man that is more righteous than himſelf as it is *Habak.* 1. 13. I ſay when we obſerve ſuch things in Scripture, and find our obſervations confirmed by the accounts and hiſtories of former and later ages, when we reflect upon the unſpeakable miſeries and butcheries of thoſe plain hearted and precious ſervants of Chriſt, the *Albingenſes* and *Waldenſes*, how they fell as a prey to their

their cruel adverſaries notwithſtanding the convincing ſimplicity and holineſs of their lives, and all their fervent cries, and appeals to God, how the very flower of the reformed Proteſtant intereſt in *France* was cut off with more than barbarous inhumanity, ſo that the Streets were waſhed, and the Canals of *Paris* ran with their precious bloud.

What horrid and unparallelled tortures the ſervants of God felt in that cruel Maſſacre in *Ireland*, a hiſtory too tragical for a tender hearted Reader to ſtay long upon: And how in our own Land, the moſt eminent Miniſters and Chriſtians were ſent to heaven in a fiery chariot in thoſe doleful *Marian* days: I ſay when we read and conſider ſuch things as theſe, it rouzes our fears, and puts us into frights when we ſee our ſelves threatned with the ſame enemies and dangers; when the feet of them that carried out the dear ſervants of God in bloudy winding ſheets to their graves, ſtand at the door to carry us forth next, if providence looſe their chain, and give them a permiſſion ſo to do; and our fears on this account are heightned by conſidering and revolving theſe four things in our thoughts, which we are always more inclined to do, than the things that ſhould fortifie our faith, and heighten our Chriſtian courage; as,

1. We are very apt to conſider that as the ſame race and kind of men that committed theſe outrages upon our brethren, are ſtill in being and that their rage and malice is not abated in the leaſt degree, but is as fierce and cruel as ever it was, *Gal.* 4. 29. *As then he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo it is now.* So it was then, and juſt ſo it is ſtill, the old enmity is entailed upon all wicked men from generation to generation; *multi adhuc ſunt qui clavum ſanguine*

Abelis

Abelis rubentem adhuc circumferunt. Cain's club is to this day carried up and down the world ſtained with the bloud of *Abel*, as *Bucholtzer* ſpeaks; 'tis a rooted antipathy, and it runs in a bloud, and will run as long as there are wicked men from whom and to whom it ſhall be propagated, and a devil in hell, by whom it will not fail to be exaſperated and irritated.

2. We know alſo that nothing hinders the execution of their wicked purpoſes againſt us, but the reſtraints of providence; ſhould God looſe the chain, and give them leave to act forth the malice and rage that is in their hearts, no pity would be ſhewen by them, or could be rationally expected from them, *Pſal.* 124. 1,2,3,4,5,6. We live among Lions, and them that are ſet on fire of hell, *Pſal.* 57. 4. the only reaſon of our ſafety is this, that he who is the keeper of the Lions is alſo the ſhepherd of the ſheep.

3. We find that God hath many times let looſe theſe Lions upon his people, and given them leave to tear his lambs in pieces, and ſuck the bloud of his Saints; how well ſoever he loves them, yet hath he often delivered them into the hands of his enemies, and ſuffered them to perpetuate and act the greateſt cruelties upon them; the beſt men have ſuffered the worſt things, and the Hiſtories of all ages have delivered down unto us the moſt tragical relations of their barbarous uſage.

4. We are alſo conſcious to our ſelves how far ſhort we come in holineſs, innocency, and ſpiritual excellency of thoſe excellent perſons who have ſuffered theſe things, and therefore have no ground to expect more favour from providence than they found; we know alſo there is no promiſe in the Scriptures to which they had not as good a claim and title as ourſelves; With us are found as great, yea, greater ſins than

than in them, and therefore have no reason to please our selves with the fond imaginations of extraordinary exemptions. If we think these evils shall not come in our days, 'tis like many of them thought so too, and yet they did, and we may find it quite otherwise, *Lam.* 4. 12. *Who would have thought that the enemy should have entered in at the gates of Jerusalem?* The revolving of these and such like considerations in our thoughts, and mixing our own unbelief with them creates a world of fears even in good men, till by resignation of all to God, and acting faith upon the promises that assure us of the sanctification of all our troubles, as that, *Rom.* 8. 28. Gods presence with us in our troubles, as that *Psal.* 91. 15. his moderation of our troubles to that measure and degree in which they are supportable, *Isai.* 27. 8. And the safe and comfortable outlet and final deliverance from them all at last, according to that in *Rev.* 7. 17. We do at last recover our hearts out of the hands of our fears again, and compose them to a quiet and sweet satisfaction in the wise and holy pleasure of our God.

5. *Cause.*

5. Our immoderate love of life, and the comforts and conveniencies thereof may be assigned as a proper and real ground and cause of our sinful fears, when the dangers of the times threaten the one or other: did we love our lives less, we should fear and tremble less than we do. It is said of those renowned Saints, *Rev.* 12. 11. *They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their Testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the Death.*

They overcame, not only the fury of their enemies without them, but their sinful fears within them; and this victory was atchieved by their mortification, to the inordinate and immoderate love of life, certainly

tainly their own fears had overcome them, if they had not firſt overcome the love of life: It was not therefore without very great reaſon that our Lord injoyned it upon all his diſciples and followers, to *hate their own lives*, *Luke* 14. 26. not abſolutely, but in compariſon and competition with him, (*i.e.*) to love it in ſo remiſs a degree, as to ſlight and undervalue it as a poor low thing in ſuch a compariſon, he foreſaw what ſharp tryals and ſufferings were coming upon them, and he knew if the fond and immoderate love of life were not overcome and mortified in them, it would make them warp and bend under ſuch temptations.

This was it that freed *Paul* from ſlaviſh fears, and made him ſo magnanimous and undaunted; indeed he had leſs fear upon his ſpirit though he was to ſuffer thoſe hard and ſharp things in his own perſon, than his friends had who only Sympathized with him, and were not farther concerned than by their own love and pity: He ſpake like a man who was rather a ſpectator than a ſufferer, *Acts* 20. 24, 25. *none of theſe things move me*, ſaith he, Great ſoul! not moved with bonds and afflictions? how did he attain ſo great courage and conſtancy of mind in ſuch deep and dreadful ſufferings? It was enough to have moved the ſtouteſt man in the world, yea, and to have removed the reſolutions of any that had not loved Chriſt better than his own life; but life was a trifle to him in compariſon with Jeſus Chriſt, for ſo he tells us in the next words, *I count not my life dear unto me*; *q. d.* 'Tis a low priz'd commodity in my eyes, not worth the ſaving or regarding on ſuch ſinful terms: O how many have parted with Chriſt, peace, and eternal life, for fear of loſing that which *Paul* regarded not. And if we bring our thoughts cloſer to the matter

matter, we ſhall ſoon find that this is a fountain of fears in times of danger, and that from this exceſſive love of life, we are rack'd and tortured with ten thouſand terrors. For,

1. Life is the greateſt and neareſt intereſt men naturally have in this world, and that which wraps up all other inferiour intereſts in it ſelf, *Job* 2.4. *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life.* It is a real truth, though it came from the mouth of the father of lies; afflictions never touch the quick till they touch the life; liberty, eſtates, and other accommodations in this world receive their value and eſtimation from hence, if life be cut off theſe accidents periſh, and are of no account. *Gen.* 25.32. *Behold, I am at the point to die,* (*ſaid* Eſau) *and what profit ſhall this birthright do to me?*

2. Life being naturally the deareſt intereſt of men in this world, the richeſt treaſure, and moſt beloved thing on earth to a natural man; that which ſtrikes at, and endangers life, muſt in his eyes be the greateſt evil that can befall him; on this account death becomes terrible to men, yea, as *Job* calls it, the *King of Terrors*, *Job* 18. 14. The black prince or the prince of clouds and darkneſs, as ſome tranſlate thoſe words: Yea, ſo terrible is death upon this account, that the very fear of it hath ſometimes precipitated men into the hands of it, as we ſometimes obſerve in times of peſtilence, the exceſſive fear of the Plague hath induced it.

Nonnullos ob timorem morte ſubitanea periiſſe refert Galenus. Quod igitur homo, timore mortis quæ eſt terribiliſſima, ex ſententia Ariſtotleis *aliorumq; penè omnium, moriatur, mirandum non eſt. Fuga mali, ipſum interdum accerſit, quod liquet exemplis eorum, quorum metus mortem à judice ipſis deſignatam prevenit.* Stern. *de* mort. p. 167.

3. Though

3. Though death be terrible in any ſhape, in the mildeſt form it can appear in; yet a violent and bloudy death by the hands of cruel and mercileſs men, is the moſt terrible form that death can appear in; 'tis now the King of terrors indeed, in the moſt ghaſtly repreſentation and frightful form, in its ſcarlet Robes, and terrifying formalities. In a violent death all the barbarous cruelty that the wit of our enemies can invent, or their malice inflict, is mingled together; in a violent death are many deaths contrived into one, and it oftentimes approaches men by ſuch ſlow and deliberate paces, that they feel every tread of its foot as it advanceth towards them. *Moriatur, ut ſentiat ſe mori,* Let him ſo die, (ſaid the Tyrant) that he may feel himſelf to die, yea, and how he dies by inch-meal or ſlow and lingring degrees; this is exceeding frightful, eſpecially to thoſe that are of a more ſoft and tender nature and temper, who muſt needs be ſtruck through with the terrours of death, except the Lord arm them againſt it with the aſſurance of a better life, and ſweeten theſe bitter apprehenſions by the foretaſts of it. This is enough to put even ſanctified nature into a conſternation, and make a very gracious heart to ſink, unleſs it be ſo upheld by Divine ſtrength and comfort: And hence come many, very many of our fears, and terrors, eſpecially when the ſame enemies that have been accuſtomed to this bloudy work, ſhall be found confederating and deſigning again to break in upon us, and act over again as much cruelty as ever they have done upon our brethren in times paſt.

6. Cauſe.

To conclude, many of our ſinful fears and conſternations flow from the influences of Satan upon our phantaſies. They ſay winds, and ſtorms are often

time

times raiſed by Satan both by ſea and land, and I never doubted but the Prince of the power of the air by Gods permiſſion can, and often doth put the world into great frights and diſturbances by ſuch tempeſts, *Job* 1. 19. He can raiſe the loftieſt winds, pour down roaring ſhowers, rattle in the air with fearful claps of thunder, and ſcare the lower world with terrible flaſhes of lightning. And I doubt not but he hath by the ſame permiſſion a great deal of influence and power upon the fanſies and paſſions of men. and can raiſe more terrible ſtorms and tempeſts within [illegible]han ever we heard or felt without us: he can by leave from God approach our *Phantaſies*, diſturb and trouble them exceedingly by forming frightful Idea's there; for Satan not only works upon men mediately by the miniſtry of their external ſenſes, but by reaſon of his Spiritual angelical nature, he can have immediate acceſs to the internal ſenſe alſo, as appears by diabolical dreams, and by practiſing upon that power of the Soul, he influences the paſſions of it, and puts it under very dreadful apprehenſions and conſternations: Now if Satan can provoke and exaſperate the fury and rage of wicked men, as it is evident he can do, *Rev.* 2. 10. and ſo diſturb our Fanſies and influence our paſſions, as there is no reaſon to doubt but by leave from God he can do, as well as he can go to the magazines and ſtore-houſes of thunder, lightnings, and ſtorms. O what inward ſtorms of Fear, can he ſhake our hearts withal, and if God give him but a permiſſion how ready will he be to do it? ſeeing it is ſo conducible to his deſign: for by putting men into ſuch frights he at once weakens their hands in duty as is plain from his attempt this way upon Nehemiah, *Chap.* 6. 13. and if he prevail there, he drives them into the ſnares, and trains of his

his temptations, as the fisherman and fowler do the birds and fishes into their nets, when once they have flusht and frighted them out of their coverts. And thus you have some account of the principal and true causes of our Sinful Fears.

CHAP. V.

Laying open the sinful and lamentable effects of slavish and inordinate Fear both in carnal and regenerate persons.

SECT. I.

HAving taken a view in the former Chapters of the Kinds and Causes of Fear, and seen what lies at the root of Slavish Fear and both breeds and feeds it, what fruit can we expect from such a cursed Plant, but gall and wormwood, fruit as bitter as death it self? Let us then in the next place examine and well consider these following and deplorable effects of Fear to excite us to apply our selves the more concernedly to those directions that follow in the close of this Treatise for the cure of it. And,

1. *Effect.*

The first Effect of this sinful and exorbitant passion is *distraction* of mind and thoughts in duty; both *Cicero* and *Quintilian* will have the word *tumultus*, a tumult to come from *timor multus*, much fear, 'tis a compound of those two words; much fear raises great uproars and tumults in the Soul, and puts all into hurries and distractions, so that we cannot attend upon

upon any service of God, with profit or comfort. It was therefore a very necessary mercy that was requested of God, *Luk.* 1.74. *That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear.* For it is impossible to serve God without distractions, till we can serve him without the slavish fear of enemies. The reverential fear of God is the greatest spur to duty, and choicest help in it, but the distracting fears of men will either wholly divert us from our duty, or destroy the comfort and benefit of our duties; 'tis a deadly snare of the Devil, to hinder all comfortable intercourse with God.

It is very remarkable, that when the Apostle was giving his advice to the *Corinthians*, about marriage in those times of persecution and difficulty, he commends to them a single life as most eligible; where it may be without other sinful inconveniencies, and that principally for this reason, *That they might attend upon the Lord without distractions*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 35. He foresaw what streights, cares, and fears must unavoidably distract them in such times that were most clogged and incumbred with families, and relations; when a man should be thinking, O what shall I do now to get my doubts and fears resolved about my interest in Christ? How may I so behave my self in my sufferings as to credit Religion, and not become a scandal and stumbling stone to others? His thoughts are taken up with other cares and fears! O what will become of my wife and poor little ones! what shall I do with them, and for them, to secure them, from danger?

I doubt not but it is a great design of the Devil to keep us in continual alarms and frights, and to puzzle our heads and hearts with a thousand difficulties which possibly may never befall us, or if they do, shall never prove so fatal to us as we fancy them, and all this

to unfit us for our present duties, and destroy our comfort therein; for if by frights and terrors of mind he can but once distract our thoughts, he gains three great points upon us, to our unspeakable loss.

1. Hereby he will cut off the freedom and sweetness of our communion with God in duties, and what an empty shell will the best duties be, when this kernel is wormed out by such a subtle artifice? Prayer as *Damascen* aptly expresses it, is Ἀνάβασις τοῦ νοῦ the ascension of the mind or soul to God; but distraction clips its wings; he can never offer up his soul and thoughts to God, that hath not the possession of them himself; and he that is under distracting fears possesseth not himself. The life of all communion with God in Prayer, consists in the harmony that is betwixt our hearts and words, and both with the will of God, this harmony is spoiled by distractions, and so Satan gains that point.

2. But this is not all he gains, and we lose by distracting fears; for as they cut off the freedom and sweetness of our intercourse with God in prayer, so they cut off the Soul from the succours and reliefs it might otherwise draw from the promises. We find when the *Israelites* were in great bondage, where in their minds were distracted with fears and sorrows they regarded not the supporting promises of deliverance sent them by *Moses*, *Exod.* 6. 9. *David* had an express and particular promise of the Kingdom from the mouth of God, which must needs include his deliverance out the hand of *Saul*, and all his stratagems to destroy him; but yet when eminent hazzards were before his eyes, he was afraid, and that fear betrayed the succours from the promise, so that it drew a quite contrary inclusion, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. *shall one day perish by the hand of* Saul: And again

is at the ſame point, *Pſal.* 116. 11. *All men are liars*, not excepting *Samuel* himſelf who had aſſured him of the Kingdom. This is always the property and nature of fear (as I ſhewed before) to make men diſtruſt the beſt ſecurity when they are in eminent peril: But Oh what a miſchief is this! to make us ſuſpicious of the promiſes which are our chief relief and ſupport in times of trouble: Our fears will unfit us for prayer, they will alſo ſhake the credit of the promiſes with us, and ſo great is the damage we receive both ways, that it were better for us to loſe our two eyes, than two ſuch advantages in trouble. But,

3. This is not all, by our preſent fears we loſe the benefit and comfort of all our paſt experiences, and the ſingular relief we might have from all that faithfulneſs and goodneſs of God which our eyes have ſeen in former ſtreights and dangers, the preſent fear clouds them all, *Iſai.* 51. 12, 13. Men and dangers are ſo much minded, that God is forgotten, even the God that hath hitherto preſerved us, though our former fears told us, the enemy was daily ready to devour us. All theſe ſweet reliefs are cut off from us by our diſtracting fears, and that at a time when we have moſt need of them.

2. *Effect.*

Diſſimulation and Hypocriſie is the fruit of ſlaviſh Fear; diſtraction you ſee is bad enough, but diſſimulation is worſe than diſtraction, and yet as bad as it is, fear hath driven good men into this ſnare; it will make even an upright ſoul warp and bend from the rules of that integrity and candor which ſhould be inſeparable at all times from a Chriſtian: Of whom (ſaith God to his *Iſrael*) haſt thou been afraid, that

thou haſt lied, and haſt not remembred me? God finds falſhood, and charges it upon Fear, *q. d.* I know it was againſt the reſolutions of my peoples hearts thus to diſſemble, this certainly is the effect of a fright; Who is he that hath ſcared you into this evil? It was *Abraham*'s fear that made him diſſemble to the reproach of his Religion, *Gen.* 20. 2, 11. And indeed it was but an odd ſight to ſee an heathen ſo ſchooling and reproving great *Abraham* about it as he there doth.

It was nothing but fear that drew his ſon *Iſaac* into the like ſnare, *Gen.* 26. 7. And it was fear that overcame *Peter* againſt his promiſe as well as principle to ſay concerning his dear Saviour, *I know not the man*, *Matth.* 26. 69. Had *Abraham* at that time remembred, and acted his Faith freely upon what the Lord ſaid to him, *Gen.* 17. 1. *Fear not* Abraham, *I am thy ſhield*, he had eſcaped both the ſin and ſhame into which he fell, but even that great believer was foiled by his own fears; and certainly this is a great evil, a complicated miſchief. For,

1. By theſe falls and ſcandals, Religion is made vile and contemptible in the eyes of the world, it reflects with much reproach upon God and his promiſes, as if his word were not ſufficient ſecurity for us to rely upon in times of trouble, as if it were ſafer truſting to our wit, yea, to ſin; than to the Promiſes.

2. It greatly weakens the hands of others, and proves a ſore diſcouragement to them in their trials, to ſee their brethren faint for fear, and aſhamed to own their principles; ſometimes it hath this miſchievous effect, but it is always improved by Satan and wicked men to this purpoſe. And,

3. It will be a terrible blow and wound to our own Conſciences, for ſuch flaws in our integrity we may

be kept waking and ſighing many a night; O ſee the miſchiefs of a timorous and faint ſpirit!

3. *Effect.*

Slaviſh Fears of the Creature exceedingly ſtrengthen our temptations in times of danger, and make them very efficacious and prevalent upon us. *Prov.* 29. 25. *The fear of man brings a ſnare.* Satan ſpreads the net, but we are not within its reach, till our own fears drive us into it; the recoyling of our ſpirits from ſome eminent danger, may cauſe the pulſe of a true Chriſtian to intermit and faulter, how regular ſoever it beats at other times, this will cauſe great trepidation and timidity in men that are ſincere and upright, and that is it that brings the ſnare over their ſouls. *Aaron* was a good man, and Idolatry he knew to be a great ſin, yet fear prevailed with that good man to give too much way to that great evil, *Exod.* 32. 22. *Thou knoweſt the people that they are ſet upon miſchief,* ſaith he in his own excuſe, in the matter of the golden calf, *q. d.* Lord I durſt do no otherwiſe at that time, the people were violently and paſſionately ſet upon it; had I reſiſted them, it might have coſt me dear.

It was fear that prevailed with *Origen* to yield ſo far as he did in offering incenſe to the *Idol*, the conſideration of which fact brake his heart to pieces. It was nothing but fear that made *David* play the fool, and act ſo diſhonourably as he did, 1 *Sam.* 21. 12. Fear is a ſnare in which Satan hath caught as many ſouls as in any other of his ſtratagems and toyls whatſoever. It were eaſy to give inſtances, ſo many and ſo ſad, as would inlarge this head even to tediouſneſs, but I chuſe rather to come to the particulars wherein

the danger of this ſnare of the Devil conſiſts. And,

1. Herein lies the enſnaring danger of ſinful fear, that it drives men out of their proper ſtation, out of their place and duty, beſide which there is none to be found but what is Satans ground. The ſubtle enemy of our ſalvation is aware that we are out of Gun ſhot, beyond his reach, whilſt we abide with God in the way of our duty, that the Lord is with us, whilſt we are with him, and there is no attempting our ruine under the wings of his protection. If ever therefore he meaneth to do any thing upon us, he muſt get us off that ground, and from under thoſe wings, and there is nothing like fear to do this; then we are as the birds that are wandring from their neſts, *Prov.* 27. 8. or like *Shimei* out of his limits.

2. Fear is uſually the firſt paſſion in the ſoul that beats a parley with the enemy, and treats with the tempter about terms of rendition; and as the *French* proverb is, *The Caſtle that parlies, is half wone.* 'Tis fear that conſults with fleſh and bloud, whilſt faith is ingaged with God for the ſupply of ſtrength to endure the ſiege; we have a ſad and doleful inſtance of this in *Spira*, he tells us how his own fears betrayed him, by parlying with the tempter, for thus Mr. *Bacon* in the Hiſtory of his life records the occaſion of his fall. "Whilſt *Spira* was toſſing upon the reſtleſs "waves of doubts, without Guide to truſt to, or Ha"ven to flee to for ſuccour; on the ſudden, Gods "ſpirit aſſiſting, he felt a calm, and began to di"ſcourſe with himſelf in this manner: Why wan"dereſt thou thus in uncertainties? Unhappy man! "caſt away fear, put on thy ſhield of faith; where is "thy wonted courage, thy goodneſs, thy conſtancy? "Remember that Chriſts glory lies at the ſtake, ſuffer "then without fear, and he will defend thee, he will

"tell

"tell thee what thou ſhalt anſwer; he can beat down "all danger, bring thee out of priſon, raiſe thee from "the dead: conſider *Peter* in the dungeon, the Mar- "tyrs in the fire, *&c.*

"Now was *Spira* in reaſonable quiet, being reſol- "ved to yield to thoſe weighty reaſons; yet holding "it wiſdom to examine all things, he conſults alſo "with fleſh and bloud; thus the battel renews, and "the fleſh begins in this manner: Be well adviſed, "fond man, conſider reaſons on both ſides, and then "judge, how canſt thou thus overween thine own "ſufficiency, as thou neither regardeſt the examples "of thy progenitors, nor the judgment of the whole "Church; doſt thou not conſider what miſery this "days raſhneſs will bring thee unto? Thou ſhalt loſe all "thy ſubſtance gotten with ſo much care and travel, "thou ſhalt undergo the moſt exquiſite torments that "malice it ſelf can deviſe, thou ſhalt be counted an "Heretick of all, and to cloſe up all, thou ſhalt die "ſhamefully. What thinkeſt thou of the loathſome "ſtinking Dungeon, the bloudy Ax, the burning "Faggot? Are they delightful, *&c.* Thus through "fear he firſt parlied with the Tempter, conſulted "with fleſh and bloud, and at laſt fainted and "yielded.

3. 'Tis fear that makes men impatient of waiting Gods time and method of deliverance, and ſo precipitates the ſoul, and drives it into the ſnare of the next temptation, *Iſai.* 51. 14. *The Captive exile haſteth to be delivered out of the pit.* any way or means of eſcape that comes next to hand, ſaith Fear, is better than to lie here in the pit; and when the ſoul is thus prepared by its own fears, it becomes an eaſy prey to the next temptation, by all which you ſee the miſchief that comes by fear in times of danger.

4. *Effect.*

4. Fear naturally produceth Puſillanimity, and cowardlineſs in men, a poor low ſpirit, that preſently faints and yields upon every ſlight aſſault; it extinguiſheth all Chriſtian courage and magnanimity where ever it prevails, and therefore you find it joyned frequently in the Scriptures with diſcouragement, *Deut.* 1. 21. *Fear not, neither be diſcouraged with fainting and trembling. Deut.* 20. 3. *Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble*; with diſmayedneſs. *Deut.* 31. 6. and faint heartedneſs, *Iſai.* 7. 4. theſe are the effects and conſequents of ſinful fear: And how dangerous a thing it is to have our courage extinguiſhed, and faintneſs of heart prevail upon us in a time when we have the greateſt need and uſe of courage and our perſeverance, peace and eternal happineſs rely and depend ſo much upon it, let all ſerious Chriſtians judge. 'tis ſad to us and diſhonourable to Religion to have the heartsof women, as it's ſaid of *Egypt*, *Iſai.* 19. 16. when we ſhould play the men as the Apoſtle exhorts us, 1 *Cor.* 16. 13. We find in all ages thoſe that have manifeſted moſt courage for Chriſt in time of trial, have been thoſe whoſe Faith hath ſurmounted Fear, and whoſe hearts were above all diſcouragements from this world.

Such a man was *Baſil*, as appears by his anſwer to *Valens* the Emperor who tempting him with offers of preferment, received this anſwer, Offer theſe things, ſaid he, to children; and when he threatned him with grievous ſufferings, he replied, threaten theſe things to your purple gallants that give themſelves to pleaſure, and are afraid to die.

And this was the ſpirit of courage and magnanimity with

with which the generality of the Primitive Chriſtians were animated, they feared not the faces of Tyrants, they ſhrunk not from the moſt cruel torments, and it redounded not a little to the credit of Chriſtianity, when one of *Julians* Nobles preſent at the tormenting of *Marcus* Biſhop of *Arethuſa* told the *Apoſtate* to his face, We are aſhamed O Emperor, the Chriſtians laugh at your cruelty, and grow more reſolute by it. So *Lactantius* alſo teſtifies of them, our women and children, ſaith he, not to ſpeak of men, overcome their torments, and the fire cannot fetch ſo much as a ſigh from them. If carnal fear once get the aſcendant over us, all our courage and reſolution will flag, and melt away, we may ſuffer out of unavoidable neceſſity, but ſhall never honour Chriſt and Religion by our ſufferings.

5. *Effect.*

Carnal fear is the very root of Apoſtacy, it hath made thouſands of profeſſors to faint and fall away in the hour of temptation, it is not ſo much from the fury of our enemies without, as from our own fears within, that temptations become victorious over us; from the beginning of fears Chriſt dates the beginning apoſtacy, *Matth.* 24. 9, 10. *Then ſhall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you, and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my name ſake, and then ſhall many be offended.* When troubles and dangers come to an height then fears begin to work at an height too, and then is the critical hour; fears are high, and faith is low; temptation ſtrong, and reſiſtance weak. Satan knocks at the door, and fear opens it, and yields up the ſoul to him, except ſpecial aid and aſſiſtance come in ſeaſonably from heaven,

ſo long as we can profeſs Religion without any great hazard of life, liberty, or eſtates, we may ſhew much zeal and forwardneſs in the ways of godlineſs, but when it comes to the ſharpes, to reſiſting unto bloud, few will be found to own and aſſert it openly in the face of ſuch dangers. The firſt retreat is uſually made from a free and open to a cloſe and concealed practice of Religion; not opening our windows as *Daniel* did, to ſhew we care not who knows we dare worſhip our God and are not aſhamed of our duties, but hiding our principles and practices with all the art and care imaginable, reckoning it well if we can eſcape danger by letting fall our profeſſion which might expoſe us to it: But if the inqueſt go on, and we cannot be ſecured any longer under this refuge, we muſt comply with falſe worſhip, and give ſome open ſignal that we do ſo, or elſe be marked out for ruine; then ſaith Fear, give a little more ground and retreat to the next ſecurity, which is to comply ſeemingly with that which we do not allow, hoping God will be merciful to us, and accept us if we keep our hearts for him, though we are forced thus to diſſemble and hide our principles. *Eamus ad communem errorem*, ſaid *Calderinus*, when going to the Maſs, Let us go to the common error; and as *Seneca* adviſeth about worſhipping the *Roman Gods*, *in animi religione non habeat, ſed in actibus fingat*, let us make a ſemblance and ſhew of worſhipping them, though our hearts give no Religious reſpect to them: But if ſtill the temptation hunt us further, and we come to be more narrowly ſifted, and put to a ſeverer Teſt, by ſubſcribing contrary Articles, or renouncing our former avowed principles, and that upon penalty of death, and loſs of all that is dear to us in this World; now nothing

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in all the world hazards our eternal ſalvation, as our own fears will do; this is like to be the rock on which we ſhall ſplit all, and make an horrible ſhipwrack both of truth and peace: This was the caſe of *Cranmer*, whoſe fears cauſed him to ſubſcribe againſt the dictates of his own Conſcience, and cowardly to betray the known truth, and indeed there is no temptation in the world that hath overthrown ſo many as that which hath been backt and edged with fear; the love of Preferments and honours hath ſlain its thouſands, but fear of ſufferings its ten thouſands.

6. *Effect.*

Sinful Fear puts men under great bondage of Spirit, and makes Death a thouſand times more terrible and intolerable than it would otherways be to us. You Read of ſome, *Heb.* 2. 15. *Who through the fear of death were all their life time ſubject to bondage,* (*i.e.*) It kept them in a miſerable anxiety and perplexity of mind, like ſlaves that tremble at the whip which is held over them: Thus many thouſands live under the laſh, ſo terrible is the name of death, eſpecially a violent death, that they are not able with patience to hear it mentioned; which gave the ground of that ſaying, *Præſtat ſemel, quam ſemper mori,* Its better to die once than to be dying always. And ſurely there is not a more miſerable life any poor creature can live, than ſuch a trembling life as this is. For,

1. Such a bondage as this deſtroys all the comfort and pleaſure of life, no pleaſure can grow or thrive under the ſhadow of this curſed Plant, *Nil ei beatum cui ſemper aliquis terror impendeat*, ſaith *Cicero*. All the comforts we poſſeſs in this World are imbittered by it. *Cicero Tuſc. Q.* 15.

'Tis

'Tis ſtoried of *Democles* a flatterer of *Dionyſius* the Tyrant, that he told him he was the happieſt man in the World, having Wealth, Power, Majeſty, and abundance of all things: *Dionyſius* ſets the Flatterer in all his own pomp at a Table furniſhed with all dainties, and attended upon as a King, but with an heavy ſharp ſword hanging by a ſingle Horſe hair right over his head, this made him quake and tremble ſo that he could neither eat nor drink but deſired to be freed from that eſtate: The deſign was to convince him how miſerable a life they live who live under the continual terrors of impending death and ruine. It was a ſore judgment which God threatned againſt them in *Jer.* 5. 6. *A Lion out of the forreſt ſhall ſlay them, and a Wolf of the evening ſhall ſpoil them, a Leopard ſhall watch over their Cities, every one that goeth out thence ſhall be torn in pieces.* What a miſerable life muſt thoſe people live, who could not ſtir out of the City, but they preſently were ſeized by Lions, Wolves, and Leopards, that watch'd over them, and lurked in all the Avenewes to make them a prey, and yet this is more tolerable than for a mans own fear to watch continually over him.

2. And yet I could wiſh this were the worſt of it, and that our Fears deſtroyed no better comforts than the natural comforts of this life; but alas, they alſo deſtroy our ſpiritual comforts which we might have from Gods promiſes, and our own and others experiences, which are incomparably the ſweeteſt pleaſures men have in this World: But as no creature comfort is pleaſant, ſo no promiſe reliſhes like it ſelf to him that lives in this bondage of Fear; when the terrors of death are great, the conſolations of the Almighty are ſmall.

In the written word are found all ſorts of refreſhing, ſtreng-

ſtrengthening, and heart-reviving promiſes, prepared by the wiſdom and care of God for our relief in the days of darkneſs and trouble; promiſes of ſupport under the heavieſt burdens and preſſures, *Iſai.* 41. 10. *Fear not, for I am with thee, be not diſmayed, for I am thy God, I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs.* A promiſe able to make the moſt timorous and trembling ſoul to ſhout with the joy of men in harveſt, or as they that divide the ſpoil.

There are found the encouraging promiſes of defence and protection, *Iſa.* 27. 2, 3. and *Iſa.* 33. 2. promiſes that lead us into the Almighty power of God, and put us under the wings of his care in time of danger.

Promiſes of moderation and mitigation in the day of ſharp affliction that we may be able to bear it, *Iſai.* 27. 8. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

Promiſes of deliverance out of troubles, if the malice of man bring us into trouble, the mercy of God will aſſuredly bring us out. *Pſal.* 91. 14, 15. and *Pſ.* 125. 3.

And which is moſt comfortable of all the reſt, promiſes to Sanctifie and bleſs our troubles to our good, ſo that they ſhall not only ceaſe to be hurtful, but by vertue of the promiſe, become exceeding beneficial to us. *Iſa.* 27. 9. *Rom.* 8. 28.

All theſe promiſes are provided by our tender Father for us againſt a day of ſtraits and fears; and becauſe he knew our weakneſs, and how apt our fears would be to make us ſuſpect our ſecurity by them, he hath for the performance of them, engaged his wiſdom, power, care, faithfulneſs, and unchangeableneſs, 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. *Iſai.* 27. 2, 3. 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *Iſai.* 43. 1, 2. In the midſt of ſuch

promiſes

promiſes ſo ſealed how chearful and magnanimous ſhould we be in the worſt times? And ſay as *David*, *Pſal.* 49. 5. *Why ſhould I fear in the day of evil?* Let thoſe that have no God to flee to, no promiſe to rely upon, let them fear in the day of evil, I have no cauſe to do ſo. But even from theſe moſt comfortable refuges in the promiſes, our own Fears beat us, we are ſo ſcared that we mind them not, ſo as to draw encouragement, reſolution, and courage from them. Thus the Shields of the mighty are vilely caſt away.

So for all the choice records of the Saints experiences in all former troubles and diſtreſſes; God hath by a ſingular providence, (aiming at our relief in future diſtreſſes,) preſerved them for us; if danger threaten us, we may turn to the recorded experiences his people have left us, of the ſtrange and mighty influence of his providence upon the hearts of their enemies, to ſhew them favour, *Gen.* 31. 29. *Pſal.* 106. 46. *Jer.* 15. 11.

There alſo are found the ancient Rolls and Records of the admirable methods of his peoples deliverance, contrived by his infinite and unſearchable wiſdom for them, when all their own thoughts have been at a loſs, and their underſtandings poſed and ſtaggered. *Exod.* 15. 6. 2 *Chron.* 20. 12, 15. 2 *Kings* 19. 3, 7.

There are the recorded experiences of Gods unſpotted faithfulneſs, which never failed any ſoul that durſt truſt himſelf in its arms. *Mica.* 6. 4, 5. *Joſhuah* 7. 9.

There alſo are to be found the Records of his tender and moſt fatherly care for his children, who have been to him as a peculiar treaſure in times of danger. *Pſal* 40. 17. *Deut.* 32. 10, 11, 12. *Iſai.* 49. 16. *Job* 36. 7. 2. *Chron.* 16. 9.

All theſe and many more ſupports and cordials are made

made ready to our hand and provided for a day of trouble; but alas, to what purpose, if our own fears, so transport us that we can neither apply them, nor so much as calmly ponder and consider them.

3. To conclude, by these Fears we are deprived of those manifold advantages we might gain by the calm and composed meditations of our own death, and the change it will make upon us; could we sit down in peace, and meditate in a familiar way upon death; could we look with a composed and well setled mind into our own graves, and not be scared and frighted with the thoughts of death, and startle whenever we take it, (though but in our thoughts) by the cold hand: To what seriousness would those meditations frame us? And what abundance of evils would they prevent in our conversations? The sprinkling of dust upon new writing, prevents many a blot and blur in our books or letters; and could we thus sprinkle the dust of the Grave upon our minds, it would prevent many a sin and miscarriage in our words and actions: But there is no profit or advantage redounding to us either from promises, experiences, or death it self when the soul is discomposed and put into confusion by its own fears. And thus you see some of those many mischievous effects of your own fears.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Preſcribing the rules to cure our Sinful Fears, and prevent theſe ſad and woful effects of them.

SECT. I.

WE are now come to the moſt difficult part of the work, *viz. The Cure*, of the ſinful and ſlaviſh fear of Creatures in times of danger, which if it might through the bleſſing of God be effected, we might live at hearts eaſe in the midſt of all our enemies and troubles, and like the Sun in the Heavens, keep on our ſteady courſe in the darkeſt and gloomieſt day: But before I come to the particular Rules, it will be neceſſary for the prevention of miſtakes, to lay down three uſeful cautions about this matter.

1. *Caution.*

Underſtand that none but thoſe that are in Chriſt are capable to improve the following Rules to their advantage. The ſecurity of our ſouls is the great argument uſed by Chriſt to extinguiſh our fears of them that can kill the Body, *Matth.* 10. 28. But if the Soul muſt unavoidably periſh when the Body doth, if it muſt drop into hell before the Body be laid in the grave: If he that kills the body doth by the ſame ſtroak cut off the Soul from all the means and poſſibilities of mercy and happineſs for ever; what can be offered in ſuch a caſe, to relieve a man againſt fear and trembling.

2. *Caution.*

2. *Caution.*

Expect not a perfect cure of your Fears in this life; whilſt there are enemies and dangers, there will be ſome fears working in the beſt hearts: If our Faith could be perfected, our Fears would be perfectly cured; but whilſt there is ſo much weakneſs in our Faith, there will be too much ſtrength in our Fears. And for thoſe who are naturally timorous, who have more of this paſſion in their conſtitution than other men have; and thoſe in whom melancholy is a rooted and chronical diſeaſe; it will be hard for them totally to rid themſelves of fears and dejections, though in the uſe of ſuch helps and means as follow, they may be greatly relieved againſt the tyranny of them, and enabled to poſſeſs their ſouls in much more tranquillity and comfort.

3. *Caution.*

Whoſoever expects the benefit of the following Preſcriptions and Rules, muſt not think the Reading or bare remembring them will do the work; but he muſt work them into his heart by believing and fixed meditation, and live in the daily practice of them. It is not our opening of our caſe to a Phyſician, nor his Preſcriptions and written directions that will cure a man, but he muſt reſolve to take the bitter and nauſeous potions how much ſoever he loath it, to abſtain from hurtful diet, how well ſoever he loves it, if ever he expect to be a ſound and healthful man. So it is in this caſe alſo. Theſe things premiſed the

1. *Rule.*

The firſt Rule to relieve us againſt our Slaviſh Fears, *Is ſeriouſly to conſider, and more throughly to ſtudy the Covenant of Grace, within the bleſſed Claſp and Bond whereof all believers are.* I think the clear underſtanding of the Nature, Extent, and Stability of the Covenant, and of our intereſt therein, would go a great way in the cure of our ſinful and ſlaviſh Fears.

A Covenant is more than a naked promiſe, in the Covenant, God hath graciouſly conſulted our weakneſs, fears, and doubts, and therefore proceeds with us in the higheſt way of ſolemnity, confirming his Promiſes by Oath, *Heb.* 6. 13, 17. and by Seals, *Rom.* 4. 11. Putting himſelf under the moſt ſolemn ties and engagements that can be, to his people, that from ſo firm a ratification of the Covenant with us, we might have ſtrong conſolation, *Heb.* 6. 18. He hath ſo ordered it, that it might afford ſtrong ſupports, and the moſt reviving cordials to our faint and and timorous Spirits, in all the plunges of trouble both from within, and from without. In the Covenant God makes over himſelf to his people, to be unto them a God, *Jer.* 31. 33. *Heb.* 8. 10. Wherein the Lord beſtows himſelf in all his Glorious Eſſential properties upon us, to the end that whatſoever his Almighty power, Infinite wiſdom, and Incomprehenſible mercy can afford for our protection, ſupport, deliverance, direction, pardon, or refreſhment; we might be aſſured ſhall be faithfully performed to us in all the ſtraits, fears, and exigencies of our lives. This God expects we ſhould improve by Faith, as the moſt ſovereign antidote againſt all

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our Fears in this world. *Isaiah* 43. 1, 2. *Thus saith the Lord that created thee,* O Jacob, *and he that formed thee,* O Israel; *fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, &c.* Isai. 41. 10. *Fear not, for I am with thee, be not dismaied, for I am thy God.*

And if thou Reader, be within the bond of this Covenant, thou mayest surely find enough there to quiet thy heart, whatever the matter or ground of thy fears be: If God be thy Covenant God, he will be with thee in all thy streights, wants and troubles, he will never leave, nor forsake thee. From the Covenant it was that *David* encouraged himself against all his troubles. 2. *Sam.* 23. 5. *Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting Covenant, well ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow.* He could fetch all reliefs, all comforts, all salvations out of it, and why cannot we? He desired no more for the support of his heart; *this is all my desire*; and sure if we understood and believed it as he did, we could desire no more to quiet and comfort our hearts than what this Covenant affords us. For,

1. Are we afraid what our enemies will do? We know we are in the midst of Potent, Politick, and enraged enemies; we have heard what they have done, and see what they are preparing to do again; we tremble to think what bloudy Tragedies are like to be acted over again in the World by their cruel hands: But O what heroick and noble acts of Faith should the Covenant of thy God enable thee to exert amidst all these fears? If God be thy God, then thou hast an Almighty God on thy side, and that is enough

to extinguiſh all theſe Fears, *Pſal.* 118. 6. *The Lord is on my ſide, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* Your fears come in the name of man, but your help in the name of the Lord: Let them plot, threaten, yea, and ſmite too; God is a ſhield to all that fear him, and if God be for us, who can be againſt us?

2. Are we afraid what God will do? Fear it not, your God will do nothing againſt your good; think not that he may forget you, it cannot be; ſooner may a tender mother forget her ſucking child, *Iſai.* 49. 15. no, no, *He withdraweth not his eye from the Righteous, Job* 36. 7. His eyes are continually upon all the dangers and wants of your Souls and Bodies, there is not a danger or an enemy ſtirring againſt you, but his eye is upon it. 2 *Chron.* 16. 9.

Are you afraid he will forſake and caſt you off? 'Tis true, your ſins have deſerved he ſhould do ſo, but he hath ſecured you fully againſt that fear in his Covenant, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will not turn away from them, to do them good.* All your fears of Gods forgetting or forſaking you, ſpring out of your ignorance of the Covenant.

3. Are you afraid what you ſhall do? 'Tis uſual for the people of God to propoſe difficult caſes to themſelves, and put ſtartling queſtions to their own hearts; and there may be an excellent uſe of them, to rouze them out of ſecurity, put them upon the ſearch and tryal of their conditions and eſtates, and make preparation for the worſt; but Satan uſually improves it to a quite contrary end, to deject, affright, and diſcourage them. O if fiery trials ſhould come, if my liberty and life come once to be toucht in earneſt, I fear I ſhall never have ſtrength to go on a ſtep farther in the way of Religion: I am afraid I ſhall faint in the firſt encounter, I ſhall deny the words of the

the Holy One, make ſhipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience in the firſt guſt of temptation. I can hear, and pray, and profeſs; but I doubt I cannot burn, or bleed, or lie in a dungeon for Chriſt. If I can ſcarce run with footmen in the land of peace, how do I think to contend with Horſes in the ſwellings of *Jordan*?

But yet all theſe are but groundleſs fears, either forged in thy own miſgiving heart, or ſecretly ſhuffled by Satan into it; for God hath abundantly ſecured thee againſt fear in this very particular, by that moſt ſweet ſupporting and bleſſed promiſe, annexed to the former, in the ſame Text, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will put my fear into their hearts, and that they ſhall not depart from me.* Here is another kind of Fear, than that which ſo ſtartles thee, promiſed to be put into thy heart, not a fear to ſhake and undermine thy aſſurance as this doth, but to guard and maintain it. And this is the fear that ſhall be enabled to vanquiſh and expel all thy other fears.

4. Or are you afraid what the Church ſhall do? And what will become of the *Ark* of God? Do you ſee a ſtorm gathering, the winds begin to roar, the waves to ſwell; and are you afraid what will become of that veſſel the Church, in which you have ſo great an intereſt?

It is an argument of the publickneſs and excellency of thy ſpirit, to be thus touched with the feeling ſenſe of the Churches ſufferings, and dangers. Moſt men ſeek their own things, and not the things that are of Chriſt, *Phil.* 2. 21. But yet it is your ſin ſo to fear as to ſink and faint under a ſpirit of deſpondency, and diſcouragement, which yet many good men are but too apt to do. I remember an excellent paſſage in a Letter of

Ep. ad Melanct. Anno 1549.

Luther's to *Melancthon* upon this very account. "In Private troubles, ſaith he, I am weaker, and "thou art ſtronger; thou deſpiſeſt thy own life, but "feareſt the Publick cauſe; but for the Publick I "am at reſt, being aſſured that the cauſe is juſt and "true; yea, that it is Chriſt's and Gods cauſe. I "am well nigh a ſecure ſpectator of things, and e- "ſteem not any thing theſe fierce and threatning Pa- "piſts. I beſeech thee by Chriſt, neglect not ſo "Divine promiſes and conſolations where the Scrip- "ture ſaith, Caſt thy care upon the Lord, wait upon "the Lord, be ſtrong, and he ſhall comfort thy "heart. And in another *Epiſtle*. *Anno* 1530. "I much diſlike thoſe anxious cares, "which as thou writeſt do almoſt con- "ſume thee: 'Tis not the greatneſs of the danger, "but the greatneſs of thy unbelief. *John Hus* and "others were under greater danger than we; and if "it be great, he is great that orders it. Why do "you afflict your ſelf? If the cauſe be bad, let us "renounce it; if it be good, why do we make him "a liar that bids us be ſtill? As if you were able to do "any good, by ſuch unprofitable cares. I beſeech "thee, thou that in other things art valiant, fight a- "gainſt thy ſelf, thine own greateſt enemy that puts "weapons into Satans hand.

You ſee how good men may be even overwhelmed with publick fears, but certainly if we did well conſider the bond of the Covenant that is betwixt God and his people, we ſhould be more quiet and compoſed. For by reaſon thereof it is, 1. That God is in the midſt of them, *Pſal.* 46. 1, 2, 3, 4. When any great danger threatned the Reformed Church in its tender beginnings in *Luther*'s time, he would ſay, come, let us ſing the 46 *Pſalm*, and indeed it is a lovely Song for

for ſuch times, it bears the Title of *A ſong upon Alamoth*, or a ſong for the hidden ones, God is with them to cover them under his wings. / 2. And it is plain matter of Fact, evident to all the world, that no people under the Heavens have been ſo long, and ſo wonderfully preſerved as the Church hath been: It hath overlived many bloudy Maſſacres, terrible perſecutions, ſubtle and cruel enemies; ſtill God hath preſerved and delivered it, for his promiſes oblige him to it, amongſt which thoſe two are ſignal and eminent ones, *Jer.* 30. 11. *Iſai.* 27. 3. 3. And it is obvious to all that will conſider things, that there are the ſelf ſame motives in God, and the ſelf ſame grounds and reaſons before him to take care of his Church and people that ever were in him, or did ever lie before him from the beginning of the world. For, (1.) The relation is ſtill the ſame: What though *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, thoſe renowned believers be in their Graves, and thoſe that ſucceed be far inferiour to them in Grace and Spiritual excellency; yet ſaith the Church, *Doubtleſs thou art our Father.* There is the ſame tie and bond betwixt the father and the youngeſt, weakeſt child in the family, as the eldeſt and ſtrongeſt. 2. His pity and mercy is ſtill the ſame, for that endures for ever: His bowels yern as tenderly over his people in their preſent, as ever they did in any paſt afflictions or ſtreights. 3. The rage and malice of his and his peoples enemies, is ſtill the ſame, they will reflect as blaſphemouſly and diſhonourably upon God now, ſhould he give up his people, as ever they did. *Moſes* Argument is as good now as ever it was, what will the *Egyptians* ſay? and ſo is *Joſhuah*'s too, *What wilt thou do unto thy great name?* O if theſe things were

more throughly studied and believed, they would appease many Fears.

2. *Rule.*

Work upon your hearts the consideration of the many mischiefs and miseries men draw upon themselves and others, both in this world and that to come, by their own sinful fears.

1. The miseries and calamities that sinful Fear brings upon men in this world, are unspeakable; this is it that hath plunged the Consciences of so many poor wretches into such deep distresses! this it is that hath put them upon the *Rack*, and made them roar like men in Hell, among the damned. Some have been recovered, and others have perished in these deeps of horror and despair. In the year 1550. there was at *Ferrara* in *Italy*, one *Faninus* who by reading good Books was by the grace of God converted to the knowledge of the truth, wherein he found such sweetness; that by constant reading, meditation and prayer, he grew so expert in the Scriptures, that he was able to instruct others; and though he durst not go out of the bounds of his calling to preach openly, yet by conference and private exhortations he did good to many. This coming to the knowledge of the *Pope*'s Clients, they apprehended and committed him to Prison; where he renounced the truth, and was thereupon released: But it was not long before the Lord met with him for it: So as falling into horrible torments of Conscience, he was near unto utter despair, nor could he be freed from those terrors, before he had fully resolved to venture his life more faithfully in the service of Christ.

Clarks examp. p. 27.

Dread-

Dreadful was that voice which poor *Spira* ſeemed to hear in his own Conſcience aſſoon as ever his ſinful fears had prevailed upon him to renounce the truth. *Thou wicked wretch, thou haſt denied me, thou haſt renounced the Covenant of thine obedience, thou haſt broken thy vow, hence Apoſtate, bear with thee the Sentence of thine eternal damnation.* Preſently he falls into a ſwoon, quaking and trembling, and ſtill affirmed to his death, that from that time, he never found any eaſe or peace in his mind; but profeſſed that he was captivated under the revenging hand of the Almighty God, and that he continually heard the ſentence of Chriſt, the juſt Judge againſt him, and that he knew he was utterly undone, and could neither hope for grace, or that Chriſt ſhould intercede for him to the Father.

In our dreadful *Marian* days Sir *John Cheek* who had been Tutor to King *Edward* the Sixth, was caſt into the *Tower*, and kept cloſe Priſoner; and there put to this miſerable choice, either to forego his life, or that which was more precious, his liberty of Conſcience, neither could his liberty be procured by his great friends at any lower rate, than to recant his Religion; this he was very unwilling to accept of, till his hard impriſonment, joyned with threats of much worſe in caſe of his refuſal, at laſt wrought ſo upon him whilſt he conſulted with fleſh and bloud, as drew from him an *Abrenunciation* of that truth which he had ſo long profeſſed, and ſtill believed. Upon this he was reſtored to his liberty, but never to his comfort; for the ſenſe of his own Apoſtaſie, and the daily ſight of the cruel butcheries exerciſed upon others for their conſtant adherence to the truth, made ſuch deep impreſſions upon his broken ſpirit, as brought him to a ſpeedy end of his life, yet not without ſome comfortable hopes at laſt.

Our

Our own Histories abound with multitudes of such doleful examples.

Some have been in such horror of Conscience, that they have chosen strangling rather than life; they have felt that anguish of Conscience that hath put them upon desperate resolutions and attempts against their own lives to rid themselves of it. This was the case of *Peter Moon*, who being driven by his own fears to deny the truth, presently fell into such horrour of Conscience, that seeing a sword hanging in his Parlor, would have sheathed it in his own bowels. So *Francis Spira*, before mentioned, when he was near his end, saw a knife on the Table, and running to it would have mischieved himself, had not his friends prevented him; thereupon he said, *O that I were above God, for I know that he will have no mercy on me. He lay about eight weeks* (saith the Historian) *in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion; till he became as an Anatomy, vehemently raging for drink, yet fearful to live long, dreadful of hell, yet coveting death, in a continual torment, yet his own Tormentor; and thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in hell, he represented an extraordinary example of Gods justice and power, and so ended his miserable life.*

Surely it were good to fright our selves by such dreadful examples, out of our sinful fears; is any misery we can fear from the hands of man like this? O Reader, believe it, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God: Hadst thou ever felt the rage and efficacy of a wounded and distressed Conscience, as these poor wretches felt it, no fears or threats of men should drive thee into such an Hell upon earth as this is.

2. And

2. And yet though this be a doleful caſe, it is not the worſt caſe your own ſinful fears will caſt you into, except the Lord overcome and extinguiſh them in you by the fear of his name, they will not only bring you into a kind of hell upon earth, but into hell it ſelf for evermore: For ſo the righteous God hath ſaid in his word of truth, *Rev.* 21. 8. *But the fearful, and unbelieving, &c. ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death.* Behold here, the Marſhal Law of Heaven, executed upon Cowards and Renegadoes, whoſe fears make them revolt from Chriſt in the time of danger. Think upon this you timorous & fainthearted profeſſors; you cannot bear the thoughts of lying in a naſty Dungeon, how will you lie then in the lake of fire and brimſtone? You are afraid of the face and frowns of a man that ſhall die, but how will you live among Devils? Is the wrath of man, like the fury of God poured out? Is not the little finger of God heavier than the loyns of all the Tyrants in the World? Remember what Chriſt hath ſaid, *Matth.* 10. 33. *But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my father which is in heaven.* Reader, The time is coming when he that ſpake theſe words ſhall break out of Heaven with a ſhout, accompanied with myriads of Angels, and ten thouſands of his Saints, the Heavens and the Earth ſhall be in dreadful conflagrations round about him: The laſt Trump ſhall ſound, the Graves ſhall open, the Earth and Sea ſhall give up the dead that are in them. Thine eyes ſhall ſee him aſcend the awful throne of judgment, his faithful ones that feared not to own and appear for him in the face of all enemies and dangers, ſitting on the bench as Aſſeſſors with him; and then to be diſclaimed and renounced for ever by Jeſus Chriſt in the face

face of that great aſſembly, and proclaimed a delinquent, a Traitor to him, that denieſt his name, and truths, becauſe of the frowns of a fellow Creature long ſince withered as the graſs; O how wilt thou be able to endure this! now put both theſe together in thy ſerious conſideration, think on the terrors of Conſcience here, and the deſperate horror of it in Hell; this as a perboiling, that as a roaſting in the flames of Gods inſufferable wrath: Theſe as ſome ſcalding drops ſprinkled before hand upon thy Conſcience, that tender and ſenſible part of man; that as the lake burning for ever with fire and brimſtone. O who would ſuffer himſelf to be driven into all this miſery, by the fears of thoſe ſufferings which can but touch the fleſh, and for their duration, they are but for a moment.

Think, and think again upon thoſe words of Chriſt, *Mark* 8. 35. *He that will ſave his life ſhall loſe it.* It may be a prolonging of a miſerable life, a life worſe than death, even in thine own account; a life without the comfort or joy of life, a life ending in the ſecond death, and all this for fear of a trifle compared with what thou ſhalt afterwards feel in thine own Conſcience, and leſs than a trifle, nothing, compared with what thou muſt ſuffer from God for ever.

3. *Rule.*

He that will overcome his fears of ſufferings, muſt foreſee and provide before hand for them.

The fear of *Caution*, is a good cure to the fear of Diſtraction, the more of that, the leſs of this; this fear will cure that, as one fire draws forth another. *Heb.* 11. 7 *Noah being moved with fear, prepared an Ark.* In which he provided as much for the reſt and quie

quiet of his mind, as he did for the ſafety of his perſon and family. That which makes evils ſo frightful as they are, is their coming by way of ſurprize upon us. Thoſe troubles that find us ſecure, do leave us diſtracted and deſperate. Preſumption of continued tranquillity, proves one of the greateſt aggravations of miſery. Trouble will lie heavy enough when it comes by way of expectation, but it is intolerable when it comes quite contrary to expectation. It will be the Lot of *Babylon* to ſuffer the unexpected Vials of Gods wrath, and I wiſh none but ſhe and her children may be ſo ſurprized. *Rev.* 18. 7. O it were well for us, if in the midſt of our pleaſant enjoyments we would be putting the difficulteſt caſes to our ſelves, and mingle a few ſuch thoughts as theſe with all our earthly enjoyments and comforts.

I am now at eaſe in the midſt of my habitation, but the time may be at hand, when my habitation ſhall be in a Priſon, I ſee no faces at preſent, but thoſe of friends, full of ſmiles and honours, I may ſee none ſhortly but the faces of enemies full of frowns and terrors. I have now an eſtate to ſupply my wants, and provide for my family, but this may ſhortly fall as a prey to the enemy, they may ſweep away all that I have gathered, reap the fruits of all my labours, ——*Impius haſ ſegetes.* I have yet my life given me for a prey, but O how ſoon may it fall into cruel and bloud-thirſty hands? I have no better ſecurity for theſe things than the *Martyrs* had, who ſuffered the loſs of all theſe things for Chriſts ſake; a double advantage would reſult to us from ſuch meditations as theſe, *viz.* The Advantage,

1. Of Acquaintance with
2. Of Preparation for

} Troubles.

1. Hereby our thoughts would be better acquainted

ted with these evils, and the more they are acquainted, the less they will start and fright at them: We should not think it strange concerning the fiery trial, as it is 1 *Pet.* 4. 12. It is with our thoughts, as it is with young colts, and so they start at every new thing they meet, but we cure them of it, by bringing them home to that they start at, and making them smell to it; better acquaintance cures this startling humour at them. The newness of evil, saith a late grave and Learned Divine, is the cause of fear, when the mind it self hath had no preceding encounter with it, whereby to judge of its strength, nor example of another mans prosperous issue, to confirm its hopes in the like success: For, as I noted before out of the *Philosophers*, experience is instead of armour, and is a kind of fortitude, enabling both to judge, and to bear troubles; for there are some things which are μορμολύκεια καὶ προσωπεῖα, scarecrows and vizors which children fear, only out of ignorance; assoon as they are known they cease to be terrible.

Dr. *Edw. Reynolds.*

Epictet.

I know our minds naturally reluctate, and decline such harsh and unpleasant subjects: 'Tis hard to bring our thoughts to them in good earnest, and harder to dwell so long as is necessary to this end upon them. We had rather take a pleasant prospect of future felicity and prosperity in this world; of multiplying our days as the sand, and at last dying quietly in our Nest, as *Job* speaks. Our thoughts run nimbly upon such pleasant fancies like oyled wheels, and have need of trigging, but when they come into the deep and dirty ways of suffering, there they drive heavily lik *Pharaohs* Chariots, dismounted from their wheels. But that which is most pleasant, is not always most useful

uſeful and neceſſary; Our Lord was well acquainted with griefs, though our thoughts be ſuch great ſtrangers to them, he often thought and ſpake of his ſufferings, and of the bloudy Baptiſm, with which he was to be baptized, *Luke* 12. 50. and he not only minded his own ſufferings before hand, but when he perceived the fond imaginations, and vain fanſies of ſome that followed and profeſſed him, deluding them with expectations of earthly proſperity and reſt; he gave their thoughts a turn to this leſs pleaſing, but more needful ſubject, the things they were to ſuffer for his name; inſtead of anſwering a fooliſh and groundleſs queſtion, of ſitting on his Right and Left hand, like earthly *Grandees*, he rebukes the folly of the *Queſtioniſt*, and asks a leſs pleaſing queſtion, *Matth.* 20.22. *But Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Ye know not what ye ask, are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of? And to be baptized with the baptiſm that I ſhall be baptized with? q. d.* You do but abuſe your ſelves with ſuch fond and idle dreams, there is other imployment cut out for you in the purpoſe of God; Inſtead of ſitting upon Thrones and Tribunals, it would become you to think of being brought before them as Priſoners to receive your doom and ſentence to die for my ſake; theſe thoughts would do you a great deal more ſervice.

2. As ſuch meditations would acquaint us better, ſo they would prepare us better to encounter troubles and difficult things when they come. Readineſs and preparation would ſubdue and baniſh our fears; we are never much ſcared with that for which our minds are prepared. There is the ſame difference in this caſe, as there is betwixt a Souldier in compleat Armour, and ready at every point for his enemy; and one that is allarm'd in his bed, who hath laid his cloaths

cloaths in one place, and his Arms in another, when his enemy is breaking open his chamber door upon him. It was not therefore without the most weighty reason, that the Apostle presses us so earnestly, *Eph.* 6. 13, 14. *Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore having your loyns girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of Righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* We see the benefit of such previsions and provisions for sufferings in that great example of courage and constancy, *Acts* 21. 13. *I am ready,* (saith *Paul*) *not only to be bound, but to die at* Jerusalem. And the same courage and constancy remained in him, when he was entering the very Lists, and going to lay his very neck upon the block, 2. *Tim.* 4. 6. *I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand.* The word σπένδομαι properly signifies a *libation* or drink-offering, wherein some conceive he alluded to the very kind of his own death, *viz.* by the Sword: His heart was brought to that frame, that he could with as much willingness pour out his bloud for Christ, as the *Priests* used to pour out the drink offering to the Lord. 'Tis true, all the meditations and preparations in the world made by us, are not sufficient in themselves to carry us through such difficult services, 'tis one thing to see death as our fancy limnes it out at a distance and another thing to look death it self in the face. We can behold the painted Lyon without fear, but the living *Lyon*, makes us tremble; but yet though our suffering-strength comes not from our own preparations, or forethoughts of Death; but from Gods gracious assistance, yet usually that assistance of his is communicated to us, in and by the conscionable

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and humble use of these means; let us therefore be found waiting upon God for strength, patience, and resolutions to suffer as it becomes Christians, in the daily serious use of those means whereby he is pleased to communicate to his people.

4. *Rule.*

If ever you will subdue your own slavish fears, Commit your selves, and all that is yours into the hands of God by Faith.

This Rule is fully confirmed by that Scripture, *Prov.* 16. 3. *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.* The greatest part of our trouble and burden in times of danger, arises from the unsetledness and distraction of our own thoughts, and the way to calm and quiet our thoughts is to commit all to God. This Rule is to be applied for this end and purpose when we are going to meet Death it self, and that in all its terrible formalities, and most frightful appearances, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. *Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* And if this committing act of Faith be so useful at such a time, when the thoughts must be supposed to be in the greatest hurry; and fears in their full strength; much more will it establish the heart, and calm its passions in lesser troubles, you know what ease and relief it would be to you, if you had a Trial depending in Law for your Estates, and your hearts were overloaded and distracted with cares and fears about the issue of it: If one whom you know to be very skilful and faithful, should say to you at such a time, trouble not your self any further about this business, never break an hours sleep more

for this matter; be you as an unconcerned Spectator, commit it to me, and trust me with the management of it; I will make it my own concernment, and save you harmless. O what a burden, what an heavy load would you feel your selves eased of, assoon as you had thus transferred, and committed it to such a hand! then you would be able to eat with pleasure, and sleep in quietness: Much more ease and quietness doth your committing the matter of your fears to God give, even so much more, as his power, wisdom, and faithfulness is greater than what is to be found in men. But to make this Rule practicable, and improveable to peace, quietness of heart in an evil day, it will be necessary that you well understand,

1. What the committing act of Faith is.
2. What grounds and encouragements Believers have for it.

1. Study well the nature of this committing act of Faith, and what it supposes or implies in it, for all men cannot commit themselves to God, 'tis his own people only that can do it; nor is it every thing they can commit to God, they cannot commit themselves to his care and protection in any way, but only in his own ways. Know more particularly,

1. That he who will commit himself to God, must commit himself to him in well doing, as the *Apostle* limits it in 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. and in things agreeable to his will; else we would make God a Patron and Protector of our sins, *Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well doing.* We cannot commit our sins, but our duties to Gods protection: God is so great a friend to truth and righteousness, that in such a case he will

not

not take your part, how dear ſoever you be to him, if truth be found on your enemies part, and the miſtake on yours. Think not to entitle God to your errors or failings, much leſs to any ſinful deſigns: You may commit a doubtful caſe to him to be decided, but not a ſinful caſe to be protected. It is in vain to ſhelter any cauſe of your own under his wings, except you can write upon it as *David* did, *Pſal.* 74. 22. *Thine own cauſe, O Lord, thine own, as well as mine.* Lord plead thine own cauſe.

2. He that commits his all to God, ſuppoſes and firmly believes that all events and iſſues of things are in Gods hands; that he only can direct, over rule, and order them all as he pleaſeth. Upon this ſuppoſition, the committing acts of Faith in all our fears and diſtreſſes are built, *I truſted in thee, O Lord, I ſaid, thou art my God, my times are in thy hand, deliver me from the hands of my enemies, and from them that perſecute me.* His firm aſſent to this great truth, that his times were in Gods hands, was the reaſon why he committed himſelf into that hand. If our times, our lives, or comforts were in our enemies hands; it were to little purpoſe for us to commit our ſelves into Gods hands. And here the contrary ſences and methods of Faith and unbelief, are as conſpicuous as in any one thing whatſoever: Unbelief perſwades men that their lives and all that is dear to them, is in the hands of their enemies, and therefore perſwades them the beſt way they can take to ſecure themſelves, is by complyance with the will of their enemies, and pleaſing them. But Faith determines quite contrary, it tells us we and all that is ours is in Gods hand, and no enemy can touch us or ours till he give them a permiſſion; and therefore it is our duty and intereſt to pleaſe him, and commit all to him.

3. The committing of our selves to God implies the resignation of our wills to the will of God, to be disposed of as seems good in his eyes: So *David* commits to God the event of that sad and doubtful providence which made him flie for his life from a strong conspiracy, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25. *And the King said unto Zadock, Carry back the Ark of God into the City; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation, but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him: q. d.* Lord, the conspiracy against my life is strong, the danger great, the issue exceeding doubtful: but I commit it all into thy hand, if *David* may yet be used in any further service for his God; I shall see this City and thy lovely *Temple* again, but if not, I lie at thy foot to be disposed either for life or death, for the earthly or the heavenly *Jerusalem*, as seemeth best in thine eyes: This submission to Divine pleasure is included in the committing act of Faith. Christian, what sayest thou to it? Is thy will content to go back, that the will of God may come on, and take place of it? It may be thou canst refer a difficult case to God, provided that he will determine and issue it according to thy desires, but in truth that is no submission or resignation at all, but a sinfull limiting of, and prescribing to God. It was an excellent reply that a choice Christian once made to another; when a beloved and only Child lay in a dangerous sickness at the point of death; a friend asked the mother, what would you now desire of God in reference to your Child? Would you beg of him its life, or death, in this extremity it is now in? The Mother answered, I refer that to the will of God. But said her friend, if God would refer it to you, what would you chuse then? Why truly

ly ſaid ſhe, if God would refer it to me, I would even refer it to God again.

This is the true committing of our ſelves, and our troubleſome concerns to the Lord.

4. The committing act of Faith, implies our renouncing and diſclaiming all confidence and truſt in the arm of fleſh, and an expectation of relief from God only: If we commit our ſelves to God, we muſt ceaſe from man. *Iſai.* 2. 22. To truſt God in part, and the Creature in part, is to ſet one foot upon a Rock, and the other in a Quick-ſand: Thoſe acts of Faith that give the intire glory to God, give real relief and comfort to us.

2. Let us ſee what grounds and encouragements the people of God have to commit themſelves and all the matters of their fear to God, and ſo to enjoy the peace and comfort of a reſigned will; and there are two ſorts of encouragements before you, let the caſe be as difficult and frightful as it will; you may find ſufficient encouragements in God, and ſomewhat from your ſelves, *viz.* your relation to him, and experiences of him.

1. In God there is all that your hearts can deſire to encourage you to truſt him over all, and commit all into his hands. For,

1. He is able to help and relieve you, let the caſe be never ſo bad, yet *let* Iſrael *hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is plenteous redemption Pſal.* 130. 7, 8. Plenteous redemption (*i. e.*) all the ſtores of power, choice of methods, plenty of means, abundance of ways to ſave his people, when they can ſee no way out of their troubles: Therefore hope *Iſrael* in *Jehovah.*

2. As his Power is Almighty, ſo his Wiſdom is

Infinite and unsearchable, *He is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him, Isa.* 30.18. When the Apostle *Peter* had related the wonderful preservations of *Noah* in the Deluge, and of *Lot* in *Sodom*; one in a general destruction of the world by Water, and the other in the overthrow of those Cities by Fire: He concludes, and so should we, *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, 2 Pet.* 2. 9. Some men have much Power, but little wisdom to manage it, others are wise and prudent, but want ability; in God there is an infinite fulness of both.

3. His love to and tenderness over his people, is transcendent, and unparallelled; and this sets his wisdom and power both a work for their good, hence it is that his eyes of providence run continually throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose hearts are perfect (*i. e.*) upright towards him. 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. Thus you see how he is every way fitted as a proper object of your trust.

2. Consider your selves and you shall find encouragements to commit all to God. For,

1. You are his children, and to whom should children commit themselves in dangers and fears but to their own father? *Doubtless thou art our father*, saith the distressed Church, *Isai.* 63. 15, 16. Yea, Christian, *Thy maker is thy husband, Isai.* 54. 5. Is not that a sufficient ground to cast thy self upon him? What! a Child not trust its own Father? A wife not commit her self to her own husband?

2. You have trusted him with a far greater concern already than your estates, liberties, or lives; you have committed your souls to him, and your eternal interests, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. Shall we commit the

Jewel,

Jewel, and diſpute the Cabinet? Truſt him for heaven, and doubt him for earth?

3. You have ever found him faithful in all that you truſted him with, all your experiences are ſo many good grounds of confidence, *Pſal.* 9. 10. Well then, reſolve to truſt God over all, and quietly leave the diſpoſe of every thing to him; he hath been with you in all former ſtreights, wants, and fears, hitherto he hath helped you, and cannot he do ſo again, except you tell him how? O truſt in his wiſdom, power, and love, and lean not to your own underſtandings. The fruit of reſignation will be peace.

5. *Rule.*

If ever you well get rid of your fears and diſtractions, get your affections mortified to the world, and to the inordinate and immoderate love of every injoyment in the world.

The more you are mortified, the leſs you will be terrified; 'tis not the dead, but the living world, that puts our hearts into ſuch fears and tremblings: If our hearts were once crucified, they would ſoon be quieted. 'Tis the ſtrength of our *affections* that puts ſo much ſtrength into our *afflictions*. It was not therefore without great reaſon that the *Apoſtle* compares the life of a Chriſtian to the life of a Souldier, who if he mean to follow the *Camp*, and acquit himſelf bravely in fight, muſt not *intangle himſelf with the affairs of this life*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. Sure there is no following Chriſt's Camp, but with a diſintangled heart from the world, for proportionable to the heat of our love will be the ſtrength and height of our fears about theſe things; more particularly, if ever you will rid your ſelves of your uncomfortable and uncomely

comely fears, uſe all Gods means to mortifie your affections to the exorbitant eſteem and love of,

1. Your Eſtates.
2. Your Liberty.
3. Your Lives.

1. Get mortified and cooled hearts to your Poſſeſſions and Eſtates in the world. The pooreſt age afforded the richeſt Chriſtians, and nobleſt Martyrs. Ships deepeſt laden are not beſt for encounters. The believing Hebrews *took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing in themſelves that they had in heaven a better, and induring ſubſtance, Heb.* 10.34. They carried it rather like unconcerned *Spectators*, than the true *Proprietors*: They rejoyced when rude Souldiers carried out their goods, as if ſo many friends had been bringing them in: And whence was this? But from an heart fixed upon Heaven, and mortified to things on Earth. Doubtleſs they eſteemed and valued their Eſtates as the good providences of God, for their more comfortable accommodation in this world; but it ſeems they did, and O that we could look upon them as mercies of the loweſt and meaneſt rank and nature. The ſubſtance laid up in Heaven was a better ſubſtance, and as long as that was ſafe, the loſs of this did not afflict them.

They could bleſs God for theſe things which for a little time did miniſter refreſhment to them, but they knew them to be tranſitory enjoyments, things that would make to themſelves wings and flee away, if their enemies had not toucht them; but the ſubſtance laid up for them in Heaven, that was an *enduring ſubſtance*: So far as thoſe earthly things might further them towards Heavenly things, ſo far they prized and valued

valued them, but if Satan would turn them into ſnares and temptations to deprive them of their better ſubſtance in Heaven, they could eaſily ſlight them, and take the ſpoiling of them joyfully. In a ſtreſs of weather when the Ship is ready to ſink and founder in a Storm, all hands are readily imployed to throw the richeſt goods over-board: No man ſaith it's pity to caſt them away, but reaſon dictates to a man in that caſe, better theſe periſh, than I periſh with and for them. Theſe be the wares that ſome will not caſt overboard, and therefore they are ſaid to drown men in perdition. 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. *Demas* would rather periſh than part with theſe things. 2. *Tim.* 4. 10. But Reader, conſider ſeriouſly what comfort they can yield thee, when thou muſt look upon them as the price for which thou haſt ſold Heaven, and all the hopes of glory; even as much as the price of bloud yielded *Judas*; and ſo they will enſnare thee if thy unmortified heart be overheated with the love of them as his was.

2. Be mortified to your liberty, and take heed of placing too great an eſteem upon it, or neceſſity in it. Liberty is a deſirable thing to the very birds of the air, accommodate them the beſt you can in your cages, feed them with the richeſt fare, they had rather be cold and hungry with their liberty in the woods, than fat and warm in your houſes. But yet as ſweet as it is, there may be more ſweetneſs and comfort in parting with it, than in keeping it, as the caſe may ſtand. The doors of a Priſon can lock you in, but they cannot lock the comforter out. *Paul* and *Silas* loſt their liberty for Chriſt, but not their comfort with it; they never were ſo truly at liberty as when their feet were made faſt in the ſtocks; they never fared ſo deliciouſly, as when they fed upon Priſoners fare. God ſpread a

Table

Table for them in the Prison, sent them in a rich feast, yea and they had musick at their feast too, and that at midnight, *Acts* 16. 25.

Patmos was a barren Island, and a place designed for banished persons; it lay in the *Ægean* Sea, not far from the coast of the Lesser *Asia*: it was inhabited by none because of the exceeding barrenness of it, but such who were appointed to it for their punishment; so that here *John* could meet with no more earthly refreshment, than what the barren rocks, or wild and desperate persons condemned to live upon it, could afford: Ay, but there, there it was that Christ appeared to him in unexpressible glory; there it was that he had those ravishing visions, and saw the whole Scheme of Providence in the Government of this world, there he saw the *New Jerusalem* coming down from God out of heaven, as a bride prepared for her husband; This made a *Patmos* become a *Paradice*: never did any place afford him such comfort as this did. So that Christians may not think there is so strict and necessary a connection betwixt Liberty and Comfort, that he that takes away the first, must needs deprive them of the other. *Rev.* 1. 9, 10.

Again, Suppose we should be so fond of our Liberty as to exchange truth and a good Conscience for it; cannot God so imbitter it to you, yea, hath he not so imbittered it to many, that they were quickly weary of it, and glad of an opportunity to exchange it for a Prison. Our own *Martyrology* furnishes us with many sad examples of it: O What will yo do with your bitter dear bought Liberty, when peace is taken away from the inner man? When God shall clap up your souls in Prison, and put your Consciences into his bonds and fetters; then you will say

ſay as the Martyr did, *I am in Priſon, till I be in Priſon.*

3. Be mortified to the inordinate and fond love of life, as ever you expect relief againſt the fears of death. Reaſon thy ſelf into a lower value of thy life: Methinks you have arguments enough to cure your fondneſs in this point: Have you found it ſuch a pleaſant life to you, for ſo much of it as is paſt? You know how the Apoſtle repreſents it, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burthened.* And is a burthened and a groaning life ſo deſirable? You know alſo as he ſpeaks in the next Verſe, that whilſt you are at home in the body, you are abſent from the Lord; and is a ſtate of abſence from Jeſus Chriſt ſo deſirable to a ſoul that loves him? Can you find much pleaſure ſo far from home? You may fancy what you will, but upon ſerious recollection you will be able to tell your ſelves, that till you be dead you will never be out of the reach of Satans temptations, never freed from your own in-dwelling corruptions, theſe conflicts cannot have an end till life be ended. You alſo ſtand convinced that till you be dead, your Souls cannot be ſatisfied, nor your deſires be at reſt; have what comforts ſoever from God in the way of faith, and courſe of duties your hearts are ſtill off the center, and will ſtill gravitate and gaſp heaven-ward. You alſo know that die you muſt, and the time of your departure is at hand, and of all deaths, if you might have your choice, none is more honourable to God, or like to be ſo evidential and comfortable to you as a violent death for Chriſt; therein you come to him by conſent and choice, not by neceſſity and conſtraint therein you give a publick teſtimony for Chriſt, which is the higheſt uſe that ever our bloud

can

can be put to, or honoured by; and for the pain and torment, as the *Martyr* said, He that takes away from my torment, takes away from my reward. But even in that point, God can make it easier to you than a natural death would be; he will be with you in your extremity, and administer such reviving cordials as other men must not look to taste, at least not ordinarily; they being prepared and reserved for such, against such an hour.

O then, work out the inordinate love of life by working in such mortifying considerations upon your own hearts, and if once you gain but this point, you will quickly find all your pains and prayers richly answered in the ease and rest of your hearts, in the most scaring and frightful times.

6. *Rule.*

Eye the encouraging examples of those that have trod the path of sufferings before you, and strive to imitate such worthy patterns.

Behold the cloud of witnesses encompassing you round about; a cloud like that over the *Israelites* to *direct* you: Yea, a cloud for multitude of excellent persons to animate and encourage you. *Heb.* 12. 1. *O take them for an example in suffering affliction, and patience. James* 5. 10. Examples of excellent persons that have broken the ice, and beaten the path before us, are of excellent use to suppress our fears, and rouze our courage in our own encounters.

The first sufferers had the hardest task, they that first entred the lists for Christ, wanted those helps to suppress fear which they have left unto us. Strange and untried torments are most terrible, for *magnitudinem rerum consuetudo subducit*, trial and acquaintance abates the

the formidable greatneſs of evils. they knew not the ſtrength of that enemy they were to engage, but we fight with an enemy that hath been often beaten and triumphed over by our brethren that went before us: Certainly we that live in the laſt times, have the beſt helps that ever any had to ſubdue their fears; we have heard of the courage and conſtancy of our brethren, in as ſharp trials of their courage as ever we can be called to; we have read with what Chriſtian gallantry they have triumphed over all ſorts of ſufferings and torments, how they have been ſtrengthened with all might in the inner man unto all patience, and long ſuffering, with joyfulneſs, 1 *Colloſ.* 11. How they have gone away from the Courts that cenſured and puniſhed them, rejoycing that they were honoured to be diſhonoured for Chriſt, as the ſtrict reading of that Text is, *Acts* 5. 41. counting the reproaches of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of *Egypt*, *Heb.* 11. 26. which at that time was the Magazine of the world for Riches: You read what *Trials they have had of cruel mockings, yea, moreover of bonds and impriſonments, how they were ſtoned, ſawn aſunder, tempted, ſlain with the ſword, wandred about in Sheep skins, and Goat skins, deſtitute, afflicted, tormented*, *Heb.* 11. 36, 37. In all which they obtained a good report, they came out of the field with triumphant faith and patience; and this was not the effect of an over-heated zeal at the firſt outſet, but the ſame ſpirit of courage was found among Chriſtians in after ages, who have put off their Perſecutors with a kind of pleaſant ſcorn and contempt of Torments.

ὅπ κατηξιώθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι.

So did *Baſil*, truly ſirnamed the great, when *Valens* the Emperour in a great rage threatned him with baniſhment

nishment, and tortures, as to the first, said he, I little regard it, for the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof; and as for tortures what can they do upon such a poor thin body as mine, nothing but skin and bone? And at another time when *Eusebius* Governour of *Pontus* told him in a great rage, he would tear his very liver out of his bowels: Truly said *Basil*, you shall do me a very good turn in it, to take out my naughty liver; which inflames and diseaseth my whole body. Their enemies have professed the Christians put them to shame, by smiling at their Cruelties and and threatnings. *Ignatius* his love to Christ had so perfectly overcome all fears of sufferings, that when he was going to be thrown for a prey among the Lyons and Leopards, he professed he longed to be among them, and, said he, if they will not dispatch me the sooner, I will provoke them, that I may be with my sweet Jesus. And if we come down to later ages, we shall find as stout Champions for Christ. The Courage and undauntedness of *Luther* is trumpeted abroad throughout the Christian world, it would swell this small *Tract* too much, but to note the most eminent instances of his courage for Christ: The last he gave was by his sorrow in his last sickness, that he must carry his bloud to the Grave. The like Heroick Spirit appeared in divers persons of Honour and eminency, who zealously espoused the same cause of reformation with him. Remarkable to this purpose is that famous Epistle written by *Ulricus ab Hutten* a German Knight, in defence of *Luther*'s cause against the Cardinals and Bishops assembled at *Wormes*. "I will go through (said he) with what I have undertaken against you, and will stir up men to seek

Socrat. Hist. l. 4. c. 26.

Theod. lib. 4. cap. 19.

their

"their freedom: Such as yield not to me at first, "I will overcome with importunity; I neither care "nor fear what may befal me, being prepared for "either event; either to ruine you, to the great be- "nefit of my Countrey, or my self to fall with a good "Conscience; therefore that you may see with what "confidence I contemn your threats; I do profess "my self to be your irreconcilable enemy, whilst "ye persecute *Luther* and such as he is. No power "of yours, no injury of fortune shall alter this mind "in me; though you take away my life, yet this "well deserving of mine towards my countries liberty "shall not die. I know that my endeavour to re- "move such as you are, and to place worthy Mini- "sters in your room, is acceptable to God; and in "the last judgment, I trust it will be safer for me "to have offended you, than to have had your fa- "vour.

It was also a brave Heroick spirit by which *John* Duke of *Saxony* was acted to defend the Reformation, who despising all the favours and offers of the Court, and of *Rome*, and the terrors of Death it self; appeared as my Author speaks in its behalf against all the Devils, and the *Pope*, in three publick Imperial Assemblies, saying openly to their faces, I must serve God, or the world; and which of these two do ye think is the better? And assoon as *Luther*'s Sermons were forbidden, he hasted away, saying, I will not stay there where I cannot have my liberty to serve God. *Spangenberg. ad An.* 1531.

And now Reader, thou hast a little taste of the courage and zeal of those worthies who are gone before thee in defence of that cause for which thou fearest to suffer. Most men, saith *Chrisostom*, that read

or hear such examples, are like the Spectators of the *Roman Gladiators*, who stood by and praised their courage, but durst not enter the Lists, to undertake what they did. If ever thou wilt get like courage for Christ, thus improve such famous examples.

1. Make use of them to obviate the prejudice of singularity; you see you have store of good company, the same things you are like to suffer for Christ, have been accomplished in the rest of your brethren in the world. 1 *Pet.* 5. 9.

2, Improve them against the prejudice of all that shame that attends sufferings, here you may see the most excellent persons in the world reckoning it their glory to suffer the vilest things for Jesus Christ. *Acts* 5. 41. *Heb.* 11. 26.

3. Improve them against the conceit of the insupportableness of sufferings. Lo here, poor weak creatures which have been carried honourably and comfortably through the cruellest and difficultest sufferings for Christ. Our Women and Children, not to speak of men (saith *Tertullian*) overcome their Tormentors, and the fire cannot fetch so much as a sigh from them.

4. Improve them against thine own unbelief, and staggerings at the faithfulness of God in that promise; *Isa.* 43. 2. *When thou passest through the fire, I will be with thee, &c.* Lo here you have the recorded and faithful testimonies of such as have tried it, with one voice witnessing for God, *Thy word is truth, thy word is truth.*

5. Improve them against the sensible weakness of your own graces, are you afraid your faith, love, and patience are too weak to carry you through great trials? Why, doubtless so were many of them too, they were men of like fears, troubled with a bad heart, and a busie devil as well as you; they also had their

clouds

clouds and damps as you have; yet the Almighty power of God ſupported them; and out of weakneſs they were made ſtrong: Deſpond not therefore but get a judgment ſatisfied, *Pſal.* 44. 22. A Conſcience ſprinkled, 2 *Tim.* 1.7. And a Call cleared, *Dan.* 6. 10. Exerciſe Faith alſo with reſpect to Divine aſſiſtances, and everlaſting rewards as they did; and doubt not but the ſame God that enabled them to finiſh their courſe with joy, will be as good to you as he was to them. Conſider, Chriſt hath done as much for you as he did for any of them, and deſerves as much from you as from any of them; and hath prepared the ſame glory for you, that he prepared for them: that ſuch conſiderations might provoke you to ſhew as much courage and love to Chriſt, as any of them ever did.

7. *Rule.*

If ever you will get above the power of your own fears in a ſuffering day, make haſte to clear your intereſt in Chriſt, and your pardon in his blood before that evil day come.

The clearer this, the bolder you will be; an aſſured Chriſtian was never known to be a coward in ſufferings: It is impoſſible to be clear of fears, till you are cleared of the doubts about intereſt in, and pardon by Chriſt. Nothing is found more ſtrengthening to our fears, than that which clouds our evidences; and nothing more to quiet and cure our fears, than that which clears our evidences. The ſhedding abroad of Gods love in our hearts, will quickly fill them with a ſpirit of glorying in tribulations, *Rom.* 5.5. When the believing *Hebrews* once came to know in themſelves that they had an enduring ſub-

stance in Heaven, they quickly found in themselves an unconcerned heart for the loss of their comforts on earth, *Heb.* 10. 34. and so should we too. For,

1. Assurance satisfies a man that his treasure and true happiness is secured to him, and laid out of the reach of all his enemies; and so long as that is safe, he hath all the reason in the world to be quiet, and chearful, *I know* (saith *Paul*) *whom I have believed, and am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. And he gives this as the reason why he was not ashamed of Christs sufferings.

2. The assured Christian knows that if death it self come, (which is the worst men can inflict) he shall be no loser by the exchange; nay he shall make the best bargain that ever he made since he first parted with all in his afflictions, to follow Christ There are two rich bargains a Christian makes; one is when he exchanges the world for Christ in his first choice at his conversion, in point of love and stimation: the other is when he actually parts with the world for Christ at his dissolution: both the are rich bargains, and upon this ground it wathe Apostle said, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*, *Phil.* 1. 21. The death of a believer in Chri, is gain unspeakable, but if a man would mak the utmost gain by dying, he shall find it in dying for Christ, as well as in Christ: And to shew you werein the gain of such a death lies, let a few particula be weighed, wherein the gain will be cast up in bth; he that is assured he dies in Christ, knows,

1. That his living time is hilabouring time, but his dying time is his harvest tim: whilst we live we are plowing and sowing in all te duties of Religion, but when we die, then we reap te fruit and comfort of

of all our labours and duties, *Gal.* 6. 8, 9. As much therefore as the reaping time is better than the ſowing and plowing time, ſo much better is the death than the life of a believer.

2. A Believers living time is his fighting time, but his dying time is his conquering and triumphing time, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56. The conflict is ſharp, but the triumph is ſweet; and as much as victory and triumph is better than fighting, ſo much is death better than life, to him that dieth in Jeſus.

3 A Believers living time is his tireſome and weary time, but his dying time is his reſting and ſleeping time. *Iſai.* 57. 2. Here we ſpend and faint, there we reſt in our beds, and as much as refreſhing reſt in ſleep is better than tiring and fainting; ſo much is a Believers death better than his life.

4. A Believers living time is his waiting and longing time, but his time of dying is the time of enjoying what he hath long wiſhed and waited for, *Phil.* 1. 23. Here we groan and ſigh for Chriſt, there we behold and enjoy Chriſt, and ſo much as viſion and fruition is better and ſweeter than hoping and waiting for it; ſo much is a believers death better than his life.

2. As the advantage a Believer makes of death is great to him by dying only in Chriſt; ſo it is much greater, and the richeſt improvement that can be made of death to die for Chriſt as well as in Chriſt: For compare them in a few particulars and you ſhall find,

1. That though a natural death hath leſs *horrour*, yet a violent death for Chriſt hath more *honour* in it. To him that dies united with Chriſt the grave is *a bed of reſt*; but to him that dies as a Martyr for Chriſt, the grave is a bed of honour. *To you* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake,* 1 *Phil.* 29.

To you it is granted as a great honour and favour to suffer for Christ; all that live in Christ have not the honour to lay down their lives for Christ. It was the great trouble of *Ludovicus Marsacus* a Knight of *France*, to be exempted because of his dignity, from wearing his chain for Christ, as the other Prisoners did; and he resented it, as a great injury, Give me (saith he to his Keeper) my chain as well as they, and create me a Knight of that noble Order.

Cur me non quoque torque donas, & illustris illius ordinis militem non creas?

2. By a natural death we only submit our selves to the unavoidable consequence of sin, but in dying a violent death for Christ, we give our testimony against the evil of sin, and for the precious truths of Jesus Christ. The first is the payment of a debt of justice due by the fall of *Adam*; the second is the payment of a debt of thankfulness and obedience due to Christ, who redeemed us with his own bloud. Thus we become witnesses for God, as well as sufferers upon the account of sin: In the first, sin witnesseth against us, in this we witness against it; and indeed it is a great testimony against the evil of sin: We declare to all the world that there is not so much evil in a Dungeon, in a bloudy Ax, or consuming flames; as there is in sin: That it is far better to lose our carnal friends, estates, liberties, and lives, than part with Christs truths and a good Conscience, as *Zuinglius* said, What sort of death should not a Christian chuse, what punishment should he not rather undergo; yea into what vault of hell should he not rather chuse to be cast: than to witness against truth & Conscience.

Quas non oportet mortis præeligere, quod non supplicium potius ferre, imo inquam profundum inferni Abyssum non intrare, quam contra conscientiam attestari?

3. A natural death in Christ may be as safe to our selves, but a violent death for Christ, will be more beneficial to others; by the former we shall come to heaven our selves, but by the latter we may bring many souls thither. The bloud of the Martyrs is truly called the seed of the Church. Many waxed confident by *Pauls* bonds, his sufferings fell out to the furtherance of the Gospel, and so may ours: In this case a Christian, like *Samson*, doth greater service against Satan and his cause, by his death, than by his life.

If we only die a natural death in our beds we die in possession of the truths of Christ our selves; but if we die Martyrs for Christ, we secure that precious inheritance to the generations to come, and those that are yet unborn shall bless God, not only for his truths, but for our courage, zeal, and constancy by which it was preserved for them, and transmitted to them.

By all this you see that death to a Believer is great gain, it's great gain if he only die in Christ, it's all that, and a great deal more added, if he also die for Christ: And he that is assured of such advantages by death either way, must needs feel his fears of death shrink away before such assurances; yea, he will rather have life in patience, and death in desire; he will not only submit quietly but rejoyce exceedingly to be used by God in such honourable imployment. Assurance will call a bloudy death a safe passage to *Canaan* through the Red Sea. It will call *Satan* that instigates these his instruments, and all that are imployed in such bloudy work by him, so many *Balaams* brought to curse, but they do indeed bless the people of God,

potius nobis deliciæ quam tormenta sunt. Basil.

and not curſe them. The aſſured Chriſtian, looks upon his death as his wedding day, *Rev.* 19. 7. And therefore it doth not much differ whether the horſe ſent to fetch him to Chriſt be pale, or red, ſo he may be with Chriſt his love as *Ignatius* call'd him.

He looks upon death as his day of enlargement out of Priſon, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8. and it is not much odds what hand open the door, or whether a friend or enemy cloſe his eyes, ſo he have his liberty, and may be with Chriſt.

O then, give the Lord no reſt till your hearts be at reſt by the aſſurance of his love, and the pardon of your ſins; when you can boldly ſay, the Lord *is your help*, you will quickly ſay what immediately follows, *I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me*, *Heb.* 13. 6. And why, if thy heart be upright, mayeſt thou not attain it? Full aſſurance is poſſible, elſe it had not been put into the command, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. The ſealing graces are in you, the ſealing ſpirit is ready to do it for you, the ſealing promiſes belong to you; but we give not all diligence, and therefore go without the comfort of it: Would we pray more, and ſtrive more, would we keep our hearts with a ſtricter watch, mortifie ſin more throughly, and walk before God more accurately; how ſoon may we attain this bleſſed aſſurance, and in it, an excellent cure for our diſtracting and ſlaviſh fears.

8. *Rule.*

Let him that deſigns to free himſelf of diſtracting fears, be careful to maintain the purity of his conſcience, and integrity of his ways in the whole courſe of his converſation in this world.

Upright-

Uprightneſs will give us boldneſs, and purity will yield us peace. *Iſa.* 32. *The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever.* Look as fear follows guilt and guile, ſo peace and quietneſs follows Righteouſneſs and ſincerity, *Prov.* 28. 1. *The wicked flee when none purſueth, but the righteous are bold as a Lyon.* His confidence is great, becauſe his Conſcience is quiet, the peace of God guards his heart and mind. There are three remarkable ſteps by which Chriſtians riſe to the height of courage in tribulations. *Rom.* 5. 1,2,3,4. Firſt they are juſtified and acquitted from guilt by faith, *v.* 1. Then they are brought into a ſtate of favour and acceptation with God, *v.* 2. Thence they riſe one ſtep higher, even to a view of Heaven, and the glory to come, *v.* 3. and from thence they take an eaſy ſtep to glorying in tribulations, *v.* 4.

I ſay, 'tis an eaſy ſtep, for let a man once obtain the pardon of ſin, the favour of God, and a believing view and proſpect of the glory to come, and it is ſo eaſy to triumph in tribulation, in ſuch a ſtation as that is, that it will be as hard to hinder it, as to hinder a man from laughing when he is tickled.

Chriſtians have always found it a ſpring of courage and comfort. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *This is our rejoycing, even the teſtimony of our Conſciences, that in all ſincerity and godly ſimplicity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God; we have had our converſation in this world.* Their hearts did not reproach them with by-ends in Religion; their Conſciences witneſſed that they made not Religion a cloak to cover any fleſhly deſign, but were ſincere in what they profeſſed; and this enabled them to rejoyce in the midſt of ſufferings. An earthen veſſel ſet empty to the fire will crack and fly in pieces, and ſo will an hypocritical,

formal, and meer nominal Chriſtian: but he that hath ſuch ſubſtantial and real principles of courage as theſe within him, will endure the trial, and be never the worſe for the fire.

The very Heathens diſcovered the advantage of Moral integrity, and the peace it yielded to their natural Conſciences in times of trouble.

Nil conſcire tibi, nullâ palleſcere culpa hic murus aheneus eſto— It was to them as a wall of braſs, much more will godly ſimplicity, and the ſprinkling of the bloud of Chriſt upon our Conſciences, ſecure and encourage our hearts. This Atheiſtical Age laughs Conſcience and purity to ſcorn; but let them laugh, this is it will make thee laugh when they ſhall cry. *Paul* exerciſed himſelf, or made it his buſineſs, *To have always a Conſcience void of offence, both towards God and towards men, Acts* 24. 16. And it was richly worth his labour, it repayed him ten thouſand fold in the peace, courage, and comfort it gave him in all the troubles of his life, which were great and many.

ἀσκῶ meditor, operam do.

Conſcience muſt be the bearing ſhoulder on which the burden muſt lie, beware therefore it be not galled with guilt, or put out of joynt by any fall into ſin, 'tis ſad bearing on ſuch a ſhoulder: Inſtead of bearing your burdens, you will not be able to bear its pain and anguiſh. To prevent this, carefully obſerve theſe rules.

1. Over-awe your hearts every day and in every place with the eye of God; this walking as before God will keep you upright, *Gen.* 17. 1. If you ſo ſpeak and live as thoſe that know God ſees you, ſuch will be your uprightneſs, that you will not care if all the world ſee you too. An Artiſt came to *Druſius* and offered to build him an houſe ſo contrived, that he might do what

what he would within doors and no man ſee him; nay ſaid *Druſius*, ſo build it that every one may ſee.

2. Do no action, undertake no deſign that you dare not preface with Prayer; this is your rule, *Phil.* 4. 6. Touch not with that you dare not pray for a bleſſing upon; if you dare not pray, dare not to engage: If you cannot ſend your prayers before, be confident ſhame and guilt will follow after.

3. Be more afraid of grieving God, or wounding Conſcience, than of diſpleaſing or loſing all the friends you have in the world beſides; look upon every adventure upon ſin to eſcape danger, to be the ſame thing as if you ſhould ſink the Ship to avoid one that you take to be a Pirate; or as the fatal miſtake of two vials wherein there is poyſon and phyſick.

4. What counſel you would give another, that give your ſelves, when the caſe ſhall be your own; your judgment is moſt clear, when intereſt is leaſt felt. *Davids* judgment was very upright, when he judged himſelf in a remote parable.

5. Be willing to bear the faithful reproofs of your faults from men, as the reproving voice of God; for they are no leſs when duly adminiſtred: This will be a good help to keep you upright, *Pſal.* 135. 23, 24. *Let the Righteous ſmite me, &c.* It is ſaid of Sir *Anthony Cope*, that he ſhamed none ſo much as himſelf in his family Prayers, and deſired the Miniſters of his acquaintance not to favour his faults; but tell me, ſaid he, and ſpare not.

6. Be mindful daily of your dying day, and your great Audit day, and do all with reſpect to them. Thus keep your integrity and peace, and that will keep out your fears and terrors.

9. *Rule.*

9. *Rule.*

Carefully record the experiences of Gods care over you, and faithfulneſs to you in all your paſt dangers, and diſtreſſes, and apply them to the cure of your preſent fears and deſpondencies.

Recorded experiences are excellent remedies. *Exod.* 17. 14. *Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearſe it in the ears of* Joſhuah. There were two things in that Record; the victory obtained over *Amalek*, and the way of obtaining it by inceſſant prayer: And there were two things to be done to ſecure this mercy for their uſe and benefit in future fears, it muſt be recorded and rehearſed, preſerved from oblivion, and ſeaſonably produced for relief.

There are two ſpecial aſſiſtances given us againſt fear by experience.

1. It abates the terror of Sufferings.
2. It aſſiſts Faith in the promiſes.

1. Experience greatly abates the terror of ſufferings, and makes them leſs formidable and ſcaring than otherwiſe they would be; fear ſaith, they are deep waters, and will drown us; experience ſaith, they are much ſhallower than we think, and are ſafely fordable: Others have, and we may paſs through that Red ſea, and not be overwhelmed. Fear ſaith the pains of death are unconceivable ſharp and bitter, the living little know what the dying feel; and to lie in a ſtinking Priſon in continual expectations of a cruel death is an inſupportable evil: Experience contradicts all theſe falſe reports which make our hearts faint, as the ſecond *Spies* did the daunting ſtories

ſtories of the firſt; and aſſures us, Priſons and Death are not when we come home to them for Chriſt, what they ſeem and appear to be at a diſtance. O what a good report have thoſe faithful men given who have ſearched and tried theſe things! Who have gone down themſelves into the valley of the ſhadow of death, and ſeen what there is in a Priſon, and in death it ſelf, ſo long as they were in ſight and hearing able by words or ſigns to contradict our falſe Notions of it. O what a ſweet account did *Pomponius Algerius* give of his ſtinking Priſon at *Lions* in *France*! Dating all his Letters whileſt he was there, *From the delectable Orchard of the* Leonine *Priſon*: And when carried to *Venice*, in a Letter from the Priſon there he writes thus to his Chriſtian friends; I ſhall utter that which ſcarce any will believe, I have found a neſt of honey in the entrails of a Lyon, a Paradiſe of pleaſure in a deep dark Dungeon, in the place of ſorrow and death, tranquillity of hope and life. O here it is, that the Spirit of God, and of glory reſts upon us.

So Bleſſed Mr. *Philpot* our own Martyr, in one of his ſweet encouraging Letters, O how my heart leaps, (ſaith he) that I am ſo near to eternal bliſs, God forgive me my unthankfulneſs and unworthineſs of ſo great glory; I have ſo much joy of the reward prepared for me, the moſt wretched ſinner, that though I be in the place of darkneſs and mourning, yet I cannot lament, but am night and day ſo joyful as though I were under no croſs at all; in all the days of my life I was never ſo joyful, the name of the Lord be praiſed.

Others have given the ſignals agreed upon betwixt them and their friends in the midſt of the flames, thereby to the laſt confirming this truth, that God makes the inſide of ſufferings quite another thing what the appearance

pearance and outside of them is to sense. Thus the experience of others abates the terrors of sufferings to you; and all this is fully confirmed by the personal experience you your selves have had of the supports and comforts of God, wherein soever you have conscientiously suffered for his sake.

2. And this cannot but be a singular assistance to your faith, your own and others experiences; just like *Aaron* and *Hur*, stay up the hands of Faith on the one side and the other that they hang not down, whilst your fears like those *Amalekites* fall before you. For what is experience, but the bringing down of the Divine promises to the test of sense and feeling? It is our duty to believe the promises without tryal and experiments, but it is easier to do it after so many trials; so that your own and others experiences carefully recorded and seasonably applied; would be food to your faith, and a cure to many of your fears in a suffering day.

10. *Rule.*

You can never free your selves from sinful fears, till you throughly believe and consider Christs providential Kingdom over all the creatures and affairs in this lower world.

Poor timorous soul, is there not a King, a Supreme Lord under whom Devils and men are? Hath not Christ the reins of Government in his hands? *Matth.* 28. 18. *Phil.* 2. 9, 10, 11, 12. *John* 17. 2. Were this dominion of Christ and dependence of all creatures on him well studied and believed, it would cut off both our trust in men, and our fear of men; we should soon discern they have no power either to *help* us, or to *hurt* us but what they receive from above.

Our

Our enemies are apt to over-rate their own power in their pride, and we are as apt to over-rate it too in our fears. *Knoweſt thou not*, ſaith *Pilate* to Chriſt, *that I have power to crucifie thee, and I have power to releaſe thee, q. d.* Refuſeſt thou to anſwer me? doſt thou not know who and what I am? Yes, yes, ſaith Chriſt, I know thee well enough to be a poor impotent creature, who haſt no power at all, but what is given thee from above; I know thee, and therefore do not fear thee. But we are apt to take their own boaſts for truth, and believe their power to be ſuch as they vainly vogue it to be; whereas in truth all your enemies are ſuſtained by Chriſt. *Coloſ.* 1. 17. they are bounded and limited by Chriſt, *Rev.* 2. 10. Providence hath its influences upon their hearts and wills immediately, *Jer.* 15. 11. *Pſal.* 106. 46. So that they cannot do whatever they would do, but their wills as well as their hands are ordered by God. *Jacob* was in *Laban*'s and in *Eſau*'s hands; both hated him but neither could hurt him. *David* was in *Sauls* hand, who hunted for him as a prey, yet is forced to diſmiſs him quietly, bleſſing inſtead of ſlaying him. *Melanchthon* and *Pomeren* both fell into the hands of *Charles* the Fifth, than whom Chriſtendom had not a more prudent Prince, nor the Church of Chriſt a fiercer enemy; yet he treats theſe great and active Reformers gently, diſmiſſeth them freely, not once forbidding them to preach or print the Doctrine which he ſo much oppoſed and hated.

O Chriſtian, if ever thou wilt get above thy fears ſettle theſe things upon thy heart by faith:

1. That the reins of Government are in Chriſts hands; enemies like wild horſes may prance and tramp up and down the world, as though they would tread down all that are in their way; but the bridle

of

of Providence is in their mouths, and upon their proud necks, 2 *Kings* 19. 28. And that bridle hath a ſtrong curb.

2. The care of the Saints properly pertains to Chriſt; he is the head of the body, *Eph.* 1. 22, 23. Our conſulting head: And it were a reproach and diſhonour to Chriſt, to fill our own heads with diſtracting cares and fears, when we have ſo wiſe an head to conſult and contrive for us.

3. You have lived all your days upon the care of Chriſt hitherto, no truth is more manifeſt than this, that there hath been a wiſdom beyond your own, that hath guided your ways, *Jer.* 10. 23. A power above your own, that hath ſupported your burdens, *Pſal.* 73. 26. A ſpring of relief out of your ſelves that hath ſupplied all your wants, *Luke* 22. 35. He hath performed all things for you.

4. Jeſus Chriſt hath ſecured his people by many promiſes to take care of them how dangerous ſoever the times ſhall be, *Eccleſ.* 8. 12. *Pſal.* 76. 10. *Amos* 9. 8, 9. *Rom.* 8. 28. O if theſe things were throughly believed and well improved! fears could no more diſtract or afflict our hearts, than ſtorms or clouds could trouble the upper Region: But we forget his providences and promiſes and ſo are juſtly left in the hands of our own fears to be afflicted for it.

11. *Rule.*

Subject your carnal reaſonings to Faith, and keep your thoughts more under the government of faith, if ever you expect a compoſed and quiet heart in diſtracting evil times.

He that layeth aſide the Rules of Faith, and meaſures all thing by the rule of his own ſhallow reaſon, will

will be his own bugbear; if reaſon may be permitted to judge all things, and to make its own inferences and concluſions from the aſpects and appearances of ſecond cauſes, your hearts ſhall have no reſt day nor night; this alone will keep you in continual Alarms.

And yet how apt are the beſt men to meaſure things by this rule, and to judge of all Gods deſigns and myſterious providences by it: In other things it is the Judge and *Arbiter*, and therefore we would make it ſo here too; and what it concludes and dictates, we are prone to believe, becauſe its dictates are backt and befriended by ſenſe, whence it gathers its intelligence and information. *O quam ſapiens Argumentatrix ſibi videtur ratio humana*? How wiſe and ſtrong do its Arguments and concluſions ſeem to us, ſaith *Luther*. This carnal reaſon is the thing that puts us into ſuch confuſions of mind and thoughts. 'Tis this that,

1. Quarrels with the promiſes, ſhakes their credit, and our confidence in them, *Exod.* 5. 22, 23.

2. 'Tis this that boldly limits the Divine power, and aſſigns it boundaries of its own fixing, *Pſal.* 78. 20, 41.

3. 'Tis carnal reaſon that draws deſperate concluſions from providential appearances and aſpects, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. and prognoſticates our ruine from them.

4. 'Tis this carnal reaſon that puts us upon ſinful ſhifts and indirect courſes to deliver and ſave our ſelves from danger, which do but the more perplex and entangle us, *Iſai.* 30. 15, 16.

5. It is moſtly from our arrogant reaſonings that our thoughts are diſcompoſed and divided; from this fountain it is that they flow into our hearts in multitudes when dangers are near, *Pſal.* 94. 19. *Pſal.* 42. 1.

All

All these mischiefs owe themselves to the exorbitant actings and intrusions of our carnal reasons; but these things ought not to be so, this is beside rule. For,

1. Though there be nothing in the matters of faith or providence contrary to right reason, yet there are many things in both, quite above the reach, and beyond the ken of reason, *Isai.* 55. 8. And,

2. The confident dictates of reason are frequently confuted by experience all the world over; 'tis every day made a liar, and the frights it puts us into, proved to be vain and groundless, *Isai.* 51. 13.

Nothing then can be better for us, than to resign up our reason to faith, to see all things through the promises, and trust God over all events.

12. *Rule.*

To conclude, exalt the fear of God in your hearts, and let it gain the ascendent over all your other fears.

This is the prescription in my Text for the cure of all our slavish fears, and indeed all the forementioned rules for the cure of sinful fears run into this, and are reducible to it. For,

1. Doth the knowledge and application of the Covenant of Grace cure our fears? The fear of God is both a part of that Covenant, and an evidence of our interest in it, *Jer.* 32. 40.

2. Doth sinful fear plunge men into such distresses of Conscience? Why, the fear of God will preserve your ways clean and pure, *Psal.* 19. 9. and so those mischiefs will be prevented.

3. Doth foresight and provision for evil days prevent distracting fears when they come? Nothing like

like the fear of God enables us to such a prevision, and provision for them. *Heb.* 11.7.

4. Do we relieve our selves against Fear by committing all to God? Surely 'tis the fear of God that drives us to him as our only *Asylum*, and sure refuge, *Malachi* 3.16. They feared God, and thought upon his name, (*i.e.*) they meditated his name which was their refuge, his Attributes their chambers of rest.

5. Must our affections to the world be mortified, before our fears can be subdued? This is the instrument of mortification, *Nehem.* 5. 15.

6. Do the worthy examples of those that are gone before us, tend to the cure of our cowardise and fears? Why, the fear of God will provoke in you an holy self-jealousie, lest you fail of the grace they manifested, and come short of those excellent patterns, *Hebrews* 12. 15.

7. Is the assurance of Interest in God, and the pardon of sin, such an excellent Antidote against slavish fear? Why, he that walks in the fear of God, shall walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost also, *Acts* 9 31.

8. Is integrity of heart and way such a fountain of courage in evil times? Know Reader, no grace promotes this integrity and uprightness more than the fear of God doth, *Prov.* 16.6. *Prov.* 23. 17.

9. Do the reviving of past experiences suppress sinful fears? no doubt this was the subject which the fear of God put them upon, for mutual encouragement, *Mal.* 3. 16.

10. Are the providences of God in the world such cordials against fear? The fear of God is the very character and mark of those persons over whom his providence shall watch in the difficultest times, *Eccles.* 8. 12.

11. Doth our trusting in our own reason, and

making it our rule and measure, breed so many fears? Why, the fear of God will take men off from such self-confidence, and bring them to trust the faithful God with all doubtful issues and events, as the very scope of my Text fully manifests. Fear not their fear; their fear moving by the direction of carnal reason drove them not to God, but to the *Assyrian* for help, follow not you their example in this: But how shall they help it? Why, sanctifie the Lord of Hosts, and make him your fear.

CHAP. VII.

Answering the most material Pleas for slavish Fears, and dissolving the common Objections against courage and constancy of mind in times of danger.

THe Pleas and excuses for our cowardliness and faintness in the day of trouble are endless, and so would his task be that should undertake particularly to answer them all. 'Tis but the cutting off an *Hydra*'s head, when one is gone, ten more start up; what is most material I will here take into consideration. When good men (for with such I am dealing in this Chapter) see a formidable face and appearance of sharp and bloudy times approaching them, they begin to tremble, their hearts faint, and their hands hang down with unbecoming despondency, and pusillanimity; their thoughts are so distracted, their reason and faith so clouded by their fears, that their temptations are thereby exceedingly strengthened upon

upon them', and their principles and professions brought under the derision and contempts of their enemies; and if their brethren, to whom God hath given more courage and constancy, and who discern the mischief like to ensue from their uncomely carriage, admonish and advise them of it: They have abundance of Pleas and defences for their fears, yea, when they reason the point of suffering in their own thoughts, and the matter is debated (as in such times it's common) betwixt faith and fear, O what endless work do their fears put upon their faith, to solve all the *But's* and *If's* which their fears will object or suppose.

Some of the principal of them I think it worth while here to consider, and endeavour to satisfie, that if possible I may prevail with all gracious persons to be more magnanimous. And first of all:

1. *Plea.*

Sufferings for Christ are strange things to the Christians of this age, we have had the happy lot to fall into milder times than the Primitive Christians did, or those that strugled in our own land in the beginning of Reformation; and therefore we may be excused for our fears, by reason of our own unacquaintedness with sufferings in our times.

Answer.

1. One fault is but a bad excuse for another, why are sufferings such strangers to you? Why did you not cast upon them in the days of peace, and reckon that such days must come? Did you not covenant with Christ to follow him whithersoever he should go,

to take up your croſs and follow him? And did not the Word plainly tell you, that *All that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution,* 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. *And that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God, Acts* 14. 22. Did we fall aſleep in quiet and proſperous days, and dream of Halcyon days all our time on earth? that the mountain of our proſperity ſtood ſtrong, and we ſhould never be moved? That we ſhould die in our neſt, and multiply our days as the ſand; *Babylon's* Children indeed dream ſo, *Rev.* 18. 7. but the Children of *Sion* ſhould be better inſtructed. Alas! how ſoon may the brighteſt day be overcaſt? The weather is not ſo variable, as the ſtate of the Church in this world is; now a calm, *Acts* 9. 31. and then a ſtorm, *Acts* 12. 1, 2. You could not but know what contingent and variable things all things on earth are; Why then did you delude your ſelves with ſuch fond dreams? But as a learned man rightly obſerves, *Mundus ſeneſcens patitur Phantaſias*, The older the world grows the more drowzie and doting it ſtill grows, and theſe are the days in which the wiſe as well as the fooliſh Virgins ſlumber. Sure 'tis but a bad Plea, after ſo many warnings from the word, and from the rod to ſay, I did not think of ſuch times, I dreamed not of them.

Gerſon.

2. Or if you ſay, though you have converſed with death and ſufferings by ſpeculation, yet you live not in ſuch times wherein you might ſee (as other ſufferers did) the encouraging faith, patience, and zeal of others ſet before your eye in a lively pattern and example. Sufferings were not only familiarized to them by frequency, but facilitated alſo by the daily examples of thoſe that went before them.

But think you indeed that nothing but encouragement and advantage to followers, arose from the trials of those that went before? Alas, there were sometimes the greatest damps and discouragements imaginable; the zeal of those that followed hath often been inflamed by the faintings of those that were tried before them. In the Seventh Persecution under *Decius*, there were standing before the Tribunal, certain of the Warriours or Knights, *viz. Ammon*, *Zenon*, *Ptolomeus*, *Ingenuus*, and a certain aged man called *Theophilus*, who all standing by as Spectators when a certain Christian was examined, and there seeing him for fear, ready to decline, and fall away, did almost burst for sorrow within themselves; they made signs to him with their hands, and all gestures of the body to be constant; this being noted be all the standers by, they were ready to lay hold upon them; but they preventing the matter, pressed up of their own accord, before the bench of the Judge, professing themselves to be Christians, insomuch that both the *President* and the *Benchers* were all astonished, and the Christians which were judged, the more encouraged. Such damping spectacles the Christians of former ages had frequently set them before them. *Anno* 250.

And it was no small trial to some of them, to hear the faintings & abnegation of those that went before them, pleaded against their constancy; as in the time of *Valens* it was urged by the Persecutors: Those that came to their trial before you, have acknowledged their errors, begged our Pardon, and returned to us; and why will you stand it out so obstinately? But the Christians answered, *Nos hac potissimum ratione viriliter stabimus, For this very reason we will stand to it the more manfully, to repair their scandal, by our greater*

courage for Christ. These were the helps and advantages they often had in those days, therefore lay not so much stress upon that; their courage undoubtedly flowed from an higher spring and better principle, than the company they suffered with.

3 And if presidents and experiences of others to break the Ice before you, be so great an advantage, surely we that live in these latter times have the most and best helps of that nature that ever any people in the world had. You have all their examples recorded for your encouragement, and therefore *Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, as though some strange thing had happened to you,* as the Apostle speaks, 1 *Pet.* 4. 12. This Plea is weighed, and no great weight found in it.

2. *Plea.*

But my nature is soft and tender, my constitution more weak and subject to the impressions of fear than others; some that have robust bodies and hardy stout minds, may better grapple with such difficulties than I can, who by constitution and education am altogether unfit to grapple with those torments, that I have not patience enough to hear related; my heart faints and dies within me, if I do but read or hear of the barbarous usages of the Martyrs, and therefore I may well be excused for my fears and faint-heartedness when the case is like to be my own.

Answer.

1. 'Tis a great mistake to think that the meer strength of natural constitution can carry any one through such sufferings for Christ, or, that natural

ral tenderneſs and weakneſs Divinely aſſiſted, cannot bear the heavieſt burden that ever God laid upon the ſhoulders of any ſufferer for Chriſt. Our ſuffering and bearing abilities are not from Nature but from Grace. We find men of ſtrong bodies and reſolute daring minds, have fainted in the time of trial. Dr. *Pendleton* in our own ſtory was a man of a robuſt and maſſie body, and a reſolute daring mind; yet when he came to the trial, he utterly fainted and fell off. On the other ſide, what poor feeble bodies have ſuſtained the greateſt torments! and out of weakneſs been made ſtrong, *Heb.* 11. 34. The Virgin *Eulalia* of *Emerita* in *Portugal* was young and tender, but Twelve years old, and with much indulgence and tenderneſs brought up in an honourable family, being a perſon of conſiderable quality; yet how couragiouſly did ſhe ſuſtain the moſt cruel Torments for Chriſt! when the Judge fawned upon her with this tempting language, Why wilt thou kill thy ſelf, ſo young a flower, and ſo near thoſe honourable Marriages and great Dowries thou mighteſt enjoy: Inſtead of returning a retracting or doubtful anſwer, *Eulalia* threw down the Idol, and ſpurnt abroad with her feet the heap of incenſe prepared for the cenſers: And when the Executioner came to her, ſhe entertained him with this language, Go to thou Hangman, burn, cut, mangle thou theſe earthly members; it is an eaſie matter to break a brittle ſubſtance, but the inward mind thou ſhalt not hurt. And when one joynt was pulled from another, ſhe ſaid, Behold, what a pleaſure it is for them O Chriſt, that remember thy triumphant victories, to attain unto theſe high dignities. So that our conſtitutional ſtrength is not to be made the meaſure of *Acts and Mon. v.* 1. *p.* 120.

our passive fortitude: God can make the feebleſt and tendereſt perſon ſtand, when ſtrong bodies and bluſtering, reſolute, daring minds faint and fall.

2. Are our bodies ſo weak, and hearts ſo tender that we can bear no ſufferings for Chriſt? Then we are no way fit to be his followers. Chriſtianity is a warfare, and Chriſtians muſt endure hardſhip, 2 *Tim.* 2. 3. Delicacy and tenderneſs is as odd a ſight in a Chriſtian, as it is in a Souldier: And we cannot be Chriſts diſciples, except we deliberate the terms, and having conſidered well what it is like to coſt us, do reſolve in the ſtrength of God to run the hazard of all with him and for him. 'Tis in vain to talk of a Religion that we think not worthy the ſuffering and enduring any great matter for.

3. And if indeed Reader, thy conſtitution be ſo delicate and tender, that thou art not able to bear the thoughts of torments for Chriſt; how is it thou art not more terrified with the torments of hell, which all they that deny Chriſt on earth muſt feel and bear eternally. O what is the wrath of man in compariſon with the wrath of God, but as the bite of a flea to the rendings of a Lyon. This is the conſideration propounded by Chriſt in *Matth.* 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.* The infinite and inſupportable wrath of the great and terrible God ſhould make our ſouls ſhrink and ſhake at the thoughts of it, rather than the ſufferings of the fleſh which are but for a moment.

4. Know that the wiſdom and tenderneſs of thy father, will proportion the burden thou muſt bear, to thy back that muſt bear it; he will debate in meaſure, and not overload thy feeble ſhoulders: Thou

ſhalt

ſhalt find thoſe things eaſie in trial, that now ſeem inſupportable in the terrible proſpect; a way of eſcape or ſupport will certainly be opened that thou mayeſt be able to bear it.

3. *Plea.*

But others plead the ſad experience they have had of their own feebleneſs and weakneſs in former trials and exerciſes of an inferiour nature, in which their faith and patience hath failed them: and how can they imagine they ſhall ever be able to ſtand in the fierceſt and moſt fiery trial. If we have run with the footmen and they have wearied us in the land of peace, how ſhall we then contend with horſes in the ſwellings of *Jordan*? *Jer.* 12. 5.

Anſwer.

1. We are ſtrong or weak in all our Trials, be they great or ſmall, according to the aſſiſting grace we receive from above; if he leave us in a common and light trial to our own ſtrength, it will be our over-match, and if he aſſiſt us in great and extraordinary trials we ſhall be more than Conquerours. At one time *Abraham* could offer up his only ſon to God with his own hand; at another time he is ſo afraid of his life, that he acts very unſuitable to the character of a Believer, and was ſhamefully rebuked for it by *Abimelech*. At one time *David* could ſay, Though an Hoſt encamp againſt me I will not fear: At another time he feigns himſelf mad, and acted beneath himſelf, both as a man, and as a man enriched with ſo much faith and experience. At one time *Peter* is afraid to be interrogated by a Maid; at another

ther time he could boldly confront the whole Council, and own Christ and his truths to their faces. In extraordinary trials, we may warrantably expect extraordinary assistances, and by them we shall be carried through the greatest, how often soever we have failed in smaller trials.

2. The design and end of God in giving us experience of our own weakness in lesser troubles, is not to discourage and daunt us against we come to greater, (which is the use *Satan* here makes of it) but to take us off from self-confidence and self-dependence; to make us see our own weakness, that we may more heartily and humbly betake our selves to him in the way of faith and fervent supplication.

4. *Plea.*

But some will object that they cannot help their fears and tremblings when any danger appears; because fear is the disease, at least the sad effect and Symptome of a disease with which God hath wounded them; a deep and fixed melancholy hath so far prevailed, that the least trouble overcomes them: If any sad afflictive providence befal, or but threaten them; their fears presently rise, and their hearts sink, sleep departs, thoughts tumultuate, the bloud boyls, and the whole frame of nature is put into disorder. If therefore the Lord should permit such great and dreadful trials to befal them, they can think of nothing less than dying by the hand of their own fears, before the hand of any enemy touch them; or which is a thousand times worse, be driven by their fears into the net of temptation, even to deny the Lord that bought them.

Answer,

Answer.

This I know is the sad case of many gracious persons, and I have reason to pity those that are thus exercised; O 'tis an heavy stroke, a dismal state, a deep wound indeed: But yet the wisdom of God hath ordered this affliction upon his people for gracious ends and uses; hereby they are made the more tender and watchful, circumspect and careful in their ways, that they may shun and escape as many occasions of trouble as they can, being so unable to grapple with them. I say not but there are higher and nobler motives that make them circumspect and tender, but yet the preservation of our own quietness is useful in its place, and 'tis a mercy if that or any thing else be sanctified to prevent sin, and promote care of duty. This is your clog to keep you from straying.

2. And when you shall be called forth to greater trials, that which you now call your snare, may be your advantage, and that in divers respects.

1. These very distempers of body and mind serve to imbitter the comforts and pleasures of this world to you, and make life it self less desirable to you than it is to others, they much wean your hearts from, and make life more burdensome to you than it is to others who enjoy more of the pleasure and sweetness of it than you can do. I have often thought this to be one design and end of Providence in permitting such distempers to seize so many gracious persons as labour under it, and providence knows how to make use of this effect to singular purpose and advantage to you, when a call

It was common with the Martyrs to sweeten death to themselves by reckoning what infirmities it would cure them of, one of his blindness, another of his lameness, &c.

a call to ſuffering ſhall come; this may have its place and uſe under higher and more ſpiritual conſiderations to facilitate death, and make your ſeparation from this world the more eaſie to you; for though it be a more noble and raiſed act of faith and ſelf denial to offer up to God our lives, when they are made moſt pleaſant and deſirable to us upon natural accounts, yet it is not ſo eaſie to part with them as it is when God hath firſt imbittered them to us. Your lives are of little value to you now, becauſe of this burdenſome clog you muſt draw after you, but if you ſhould increaſe your burden by ſo horrid an addition of guilt, as the denying of Chriſt, or his known truths would do, you would not know what to do with ſuch a life; it would certainly lie upon your hands as a burthen. God knows how to uſe theſe things in the way of his providence to your great advantage.

2. Art thou a poor melancholy and timorous perſon? Certainly if thou be gracious as well as timorous this will drive thee nearer to God; and the greater thy dangers are, the more frequent and fervent will thy addreſſes to him be: Thou feeleſt the need of everlaſting arms underneath thee to bear thee up under, and to carry through ſmaller troubles; that other perſons make nothing of, much more in ſuch deep trials, that put the ſtrongeſt Chriſtians to the utmoſt of their faith and patience.

And 3dly. What if the Lord will make an advantage out of your weakneſs, to diſplay more evidently his own power in your ſupport? you know what the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 12. 9, 10. *And he ſaid unto me, my grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs: moſt gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me —— for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.*

ſtrong. If his infirmities might ſerve as a foil to ſet off the grace of God with a more bright and ſparkling luſtre, he would rejoyce in his infirmities, and ſo ſhould you: Well then, let not this diſcourage you, the infirmity of nature you complain of may make death the leſs terrible; it ſerved to that purpoſe to bleſſed *Baſil* (as you heard before) when his enemy threatned to tear out his Liver, he thought it a kindneſs to have that Liver torn out that had given him ſo much trouble. It may drive thee nearer to God, and miniſter a fit opportunity for the diſplay of his grace in the time of need.

5. Plea.

But what if God ſhould hide his face from my ſoul in the day of my ſtreights and troubles, and not only ſo, but permit Satan to buffet me with his horrid temptations and injections, and ſo I ſhould fall like the Ship in which *Paul* ſailed, betwixt theſe two boiſterous Seas; what can I ſuſpect leſs than a ſhipwrack of my ſoul, body, and all the comforts of both, in this world, and in that to come?

Anſwer.

1. So far as the fears of ſuch a miſery awaken you to prayer for the prevention of it, it may be ſerviceable to your ſouls, but when it only works diſtraction and deſpondency of mind, it is your ſin, and Satans ſnare. The Prophet *Jeremy* made a good uſe of ſuch a ſuppoſed evil by way of deprecation, *Jer.* 17. 17. *Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil. q. d.* In the evil day I have no place of retreat or refuge, but thy love and favour; Lord, that

that is all I have to depend on, and relieve my self by: I comfort my self against trouble with this confidence, that if men be cruel, yet thou wilt be kind; if they frown, thou wilt smile; if the world cast me out, thou wilt take me in; but if thou shouldest be a terror to me instead of a comforter, if they afflict my body, and thou affright my soul with thy frowns too; what a deplorable condition shall I be in then! Improve it to such an end as he did, to secure the favour of God, and it will do you no harm.

2. It is not usual with God to estrange himself from his people in trouble, nor to frown upon them when men do. The common experience of Believers stands ready to attest and seal this truth, that Christians never find more kindness from God, than when they feel most cruelty from men for his sake; consult the whole cloud of witnesses, and you will find they have still found the undoubted verity of that tried word in 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. That *the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon sufferers.* The expression seems to allude to the Dove that *Noah* sent forth out of the Ark, which flew over the watry world, but could not rest her self any where till she returned to the Ark. So the Spirit of God, called here the Spirit of Glory, from his effects and fruits, *viz.* his chearing sealing and reviving influences which makes men glory and triumph in the most afflicted state. This spirit of God seems like that Dove to hover up and down, to flee hither and thither, over this person and that, but resteth not so long upon any, as those that suffer for righteousness sake, there he commonly takes up his abode and residence.

3. And

3. And what if it should fall out in some respect according to your fears? that heaven and earth should be both clouded together, yet it will not be long before the pleasant light will spring up to you again, *Psal.* 112. 4. *Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.* You shall have his supporting presence till the comforter do come. When Mr. *Glover* came within sight of the stake, he suddenly cries out, O Austin, *he is come, he is come.*

6. *Plea.*

O but what if my trial should be long, and the siege of temptations tedious, then I am perswaded I am lost; I am no way able to continue long in a Prison, or in tortures for Christ, I have no strength to endure a long siege, my patience is too short to hold out from month to month, and from year to year, as many have done: O! I dread the thoughts of long continued trials, I tremble to think what must be the issue.

Answer.

1: Cannot you distrust your own strength and ability, but you must also limit Gods? What if you have but a small stock of Patience, cannot the Lord strengthen you with all might in the inner man unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, according to his glorious power, 1 *Coll.* 11. And is it not his promise, to confirm you to the end. 1 *Cor.* 1. 8. You neither know *how much*, nor *how long* you can bear and suffer. It is not inherent, but assisting grace by which your suffering abilities are to be

be measured. God can make that little stock of patience you have to hold out as the poor Widows cruise of oyl did, till deliverance come, he can enable your patience unto its perfect work, (*i.e.*) to work as *extensively* to all the kinds and sorts of trials, as *intensively* to the highest degree of trial, and as *protensively* to the longest duration and continuance of your trials, as he would have it: If this be a marvellous thing in your eyes, must it be so in Gods eyes also?

2. The Lord knows the proper season to come in to the relief of your slideing and fainting patience, and will assuredly come in accordingly in that season; for so run the promises, *The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants when he seeth that their power is gone, and that there is none shut up or left, Deut.* 32. 36. *Cum duplicantur lateres venit* Moses. In the mount of difficulties and extremities it shall be seen. *The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the Righteous, lest the Righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity, Psal.* 125. 3. *Ubi desinit humanum, ibi incipit divinum auxilium.* Gods power watches the opportunity of your weakness.

7. *Plea.*

But what if I should be put to cruel and exquisite tortures, suppose to the rack, to the fire, or such most dreadful sufferings as other Christians have been, what shall I do? do I think I am able to bear it? Is my strength the strength of stone, or are my bones brass, that ever I should endure such barbarous cruelties? Alas! death in the mildest form is terrible to me; how terrible then must such a death be?

Answer.

Answer.

Who enabled those Christians you mention to endure these things? They loved their lives, and sensed their pains as well as you, they had the same thoughts and fears many of them, that you now have; yet God carried them through all, and so he can you: Did not he make the devouring Flames a bed of Roses to some of them? Was he not within the fires? Did he not abate the extremity of the torment, and enable weak and tender persons to endure them patiently and chearfully? some singing in the midst of flames, others clapping their hands triumphantly, and to the last sight that could be had of them in this world, nothing appeared but signs and demonstrations of joy unspeakable. Ah friends! we judge of sufferings by the outside, and appearance, which is terrible, but we know not the inside of sufferings which is exceeding comfortable. O when shall we have done with our unbelieving *ifs* and *buts*, our questionings and doubtings of the power, wisdom and tender care of our God over us, and learn to trust him over all. Now the just shall live by faith, and he that lives by faith, shall never die by fear. The more you trust God, the less you will torment your selves. I have done; the Lord strengthen, stablish, and settle the trembling and feeble hearts of his people, by what hath been so seasonably offered for their relief by a weak hand. *Amen.*

THE END.

THE *RIGHTEOUS MAN'S* REFUGE IN THE Evil Day.

OR,

A Treatiſe upon the *Attributes* of GOD, as they are opened in his *Promiſes* and *Providences* for the Security of his People in the Storms of publick Calamities, from *Iſaiah* 26. v. 20.

By *John Flavel* Miniſter of the Goſpel.

A Man ſhall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land. Iſaiah 32. 2.

Non facilè inveniuntur præſidia in adverſitate, quæ non fuerint in pace quæſita. Auguſtine.

LONDON,
Printed by *H. Hills*, for *Robert Boulter* at the *Turks head* in *Cornhill*. 1681.

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Chriſtian Reader,

IF Heinſius, *when he had ſhut up himſelf in the Library at* Leyden, *reckoned himſelf placed in the very lap of Eternity, becauſe he converſed there with ſo many Divine Souls, and profeſſed, he took his ſeat in it with ſo lofty a ſpirit and ſweet content, that he heartily pittied all the great and rich men of the world, that were ignorant of the happineſs he there daily enjoyed. How much more may that ſoul rejoyce in its own happineſs,*

Plerumque in qua ſimulâc pedem poſui, foribus peſſulum abdo, & in ipſo eternitatis gremio inter tot illuſtres animas ſedem mihi ſumo; cum ingenti quidem animo, ut ſubinde Magnatum me miſereat qui felicitatem hanc ignorant. *Epiſtola primira.*

who hath ſhut himſelf up in the Chambers of the Divine Attributes, and exerciſe pity for the expoſed and miſerable multitude that are left as a prey to the temptations and troubles of the World?

That the days are evil is a truth preached to us by the convincing voice of ſence, and that they are like to be worſe, few can doubt that look into the moral cauſes of evil times, the impudent height of ſin, or into the Propheſies relating to theſe latter days; for whom the ſharpeſt ſufferings are appointed, to make way for the ſweeteſt mercies. A faithful Watchman of our own hath given us freſh and late warning in theſe words of truth. Hath God ſaid nothing? Doth Faith ſee nothing of a flood coming upon us? Is there ſuch a deluge of ſin among us, and doth not that Propheſie to us of a deluge of Wrath? Lift up your eyes Chriſtians, ſtand, and look through the land, Eaſtward, and Weſtward, Northward, and Southward, and tell me what you ſee? Behold a flood cometh, a flood of ſin is already broken forth upon us, the fountains of the great deeps

Mr. R. A. *Of Godly Fear. p.* 19.

deeps are broken up, and the windows of Hell are opened, &c. *In ſuch an Evil day as this is, happy is the ſoul that hath made God its refuge, even the moſt high God its habitation. He ſhall ſit* Noah *like,* Mediis tranquillus in undis, *ſafe from the fear of evil. In conſideration of the diſtreſs of many unprovided ſouls for the miſery that is coming on them, and not knowing how ſhort my uſeful time will be to any, (for I know it cannot be long) I have endeavoured once more the aſſiſtance of poor Chriſtians in theſe two ſmall Treatiſes, one of* Fear, *the other of* Preparation *for the worſt times, which it may be is the laſt help I ſhall this way be able to afford them. It is therefore my earneſt requeſt to all that fear the* Lord, *and tremble at his word, to redeem their time with double diligence, becauſe the days are evil. To clear up their intereſt in Chriſt and the promiſes, leſt the darkneſs of their Spiritual eſtate, meeting with ſuch a night of outward darkneſs overwhelmed them with terrors inſupportable. Some help is offered in this Treatiſe to direct the gracious* Soul *to its reſt in God. May the bleſſings of his Spirit ac-*

company them, and bless them to the Soul of him that Readeth. It will be matter of joy, beyond all earthly joys to the heart of,

Thy Friend and Servant

in Christ,

John Flavell.

THE

THE *RIGHTEOUS MAN'S* REFUGE, &c.

Isaiah 26. *v.* 20.

Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thy self as it were for a little moment till the indignation be over-past.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the literal, and real importance of the Text are considered, the Doctrine propounded, and the method of the following discourse stated.

SECT. I.

MAn being a prudent and prospecting Creature, can never be satisfied with present safety; except he may also see himself well secured against future dangers. Upon all appearances of trouble, 'tis natural to him to seek a refuge that he may be able to *Shun* what he is loath to *Suffer*, and survive those calamities which will ruine the defenceless and exposed multi-

tude

tude. Natural men ſeek refuge in natural things. *The rich mans wealth is his ſtrong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit, Prov.* 18. 11. *Hypocrites* make lies their refuge, and under falſhood do they hide themſelves, *Iſa.* 28. 15. Not doubting but they ſhall ſtand dry and ſafe, when the overflowing flood lays all others under water. But,

Godly men make God himſelf their hiding place, to him they have ſtill betaken themſelves in all ages, as often as calamities have befallen the world, *Pſ.* 46. 1. *God is our refuge and ſtrength a very preſent help in trouble.* As Chickens run under the wings of the Hen for ſafety, when the Kite hovers over them, ſo do they fly to their God for ſanctuary, *Pſal.* 56. 3. *At what time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee. q. d.* Lord, if a ſtorm of trouble at any time overtake me, I will make bold to come under thy roof for ſhelter, and indeed not ſo bold as welcome; 'tis no preſumption in them, after ſo gracious an invitation from their God, *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers.*

My Friends, a ſound of trouble is in our ears, the clouds gather and blacken upon us more and more: Diſtreſs of Nations with perplexity ſeems to be near, our day haſtens to an end, and the ſhadows of the night are ſtretching forth upon us. What greater ſervice therefore can I do for your ſouls, than by the light of this Scripture (as with a Candle in my hand) to lead you to your Chambers, and ſhew you your Lodgings in the Attributes and promiſes of God, before I take my leave of you, and bid you good night.

O with what ſatisfaction ſhould I part with you, were I but ſure to leave you under Chriſts wings! It was Chriſts lamentation over *Jeruſalem*, that they would

would not be gathered under his wings, when the *Roman* Eagle was ready to hover over that City; and you know how dear they paid for their obstinacy and infidelity. Be warned by that dreadful example, and among the rest of your mercies bless God heartily for this, That so sweet a voice sounds from Heaven in your ears this day, this day of frights and troubles; *Come my people, enter thou into thy Chambers*, &c.

This Chapter contains a lovely song fitted for the lips of Gods *Israel*, notwithstanding their sad captivity; for their God was with them in *Babylon*, and heard their hearts there with many promises of deliverance, and in the mystical sence, it relates to the New Testament Churches, of whose troubles, protections, and deliverances, the *Jews* in *Babylon* were a *Type*.

This Chapter, though full of excellent and seasonable truths, willl be too long to Analize; it shall suffice to search back only to the 17 *verse*, where you find the poor captived Church under despondency of mind, comparing her condition to that of a woman in travail, who hath many sharp pains, and bitter throws, yet cannot be delivered, much like that in 2 *Kings* 19. 3. *The children are come to the birth and there is no strength to bring forth.*

Against this discouragement a double relief is applyed in the following Verses, the one is a *Promise* of full deliverance at last; the other an *Invitation* into a sure Sanctuary and place of defence for present, until the time of their full deliverance came. The promise we have in *verse* 19. *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust*, &c. Their captivity was a civil death, and *Babylon* as a grave to them, so it is elsewhere described, *Ezek.* 37. *v.* 1, 3, 12.

I will

I will open your graves and cauſe you to come up out of your graves and bring you into the land of Iſrael. And therefore their deliverance is carried under the notion of a reſurrection in that promiſe.

Objection. Yea, (might they reply) the hopes of deliverance at laſt is ſome comfort, but alas, that may be far off: How ſhall we ſubſiſt till then?

Sol. Well enough, for as you have in that promiſe a ſure ground of deliverance at laſt, ſo in the interim here is a gracious Invitation into a place of ſecurity for the preſent, *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers.* In which invitation Four things call for our cloſe attention.

1. The *Form* of the invitation, including in it the qualified ſubject, *Come my people.* Gods own peculiar people, who have choſen God for their portion, and reſigned up themſelves ſincerely to him in the Covenant, are the perſons here invited, the ſame which he before called the righteous nation that kept the truth, *verſe* 2. he means thoſe that remained faithful to God (as many of them did) in *Babylon*, witneſs their ſorrow for *Sion*, *Pſal.* 137 *per totum*; and their ſolemn Appeal to God that their hearts were not turned back, nor had their ſteps declined though they were ſore broken in the place of Dragons, and covered with the ſhadow of death, *Pſal.* 44. 18, 19, 20. Theſe are the people invited to the chambers of ſecurity. And the form of invitation is full of tender compaſſion, *Come my people*; like a tender father that ſees a ſtorm coming upon his children in the fields, and takes them by the hand, ſaying, Come away my dear children, haſten home with me leſt the ſtorm overtake you, or as the Lord ſaid to *Noah* before the Deluge, Come thou and all thy houſe into the Ark, and God ſhut him in, *Gen.* 7. 1. 16. This

is

in the form of the invitation, *Come my people.*

2. The priviledge invited to; *Enter thou into thy chambers.* There is ſome variety, and indeed variety rather than contrariety in the expoſition of theſe words.

In this all are agreed, that by their Chambers, is not meant the Chambers of their own houſes; for alas, their houſes were left unto them deſolate; and if not, yet they could be no ſecurity to them now, when neither their own houſes nor their fortified city was able to defend them before. *Ezek.* 21. 14.

Grotius expounds it of the Grave, and makes theſe Chambers the ſame with the Chambers of death. *Ite in cubicula, h. e. ſepulchra veſtra.* The grave indeed is a place of ſecurity where God ſometimes hides ſome of his people in troubleſome times, as is plain in *Iſa.* 57. 1, 2. but I cannot allow this to be the ſence of this Text; God doth not comfort his captives with a natural againſt a civil death, but with protection in their troubles upon earth, as is evident from the ſcope of the whole Chapter. *Grot. in loc.*

By Chambers therefore, others underſtand the chambers of Divine providence, where the Saints are hid in evil days. So our *Annotators* on the place, and no doubt but this is in part the ſpecial intendment of the Text.

Others underſtand the *Attributes* and *Promiſes* of God to be here meant, as well as his providences. And I conceive all three make the ſence of the Text full, (*i. e.*) the Divine Attributes engaged in the promiſes, and exerciſed or actuated in the providences of God; theſe are the ſanctuaries and refuges of Gods people in days of trouble.

Calvin

Calvin understands it of the quiet repose of the Believers mind in God, but that is rather the effect of his security, than the place of it. It's Gods Attributes or his name (which is the same thing) to which the righteous fly and are safe, *Prov.* 18. 10.

Object. But you will say, why are they called *their Chambers*? Those Attributes are not theirs, but Gods.

Sol. The answer is easie, though they be Gods Properties, yet they are his peoples priviledges, and benefits; for when God makes over himself to them in Covenant to be their God, he doth as it were deliver to them the Keys of all his Attributes for their benefit and security; and is as if he should say, my wisdom is yours, to contrive for your good; my power is yours, to protect your persons; my mercy yours, to forgive your sins; my all-sufficiency yours, to supply your wants; all that I am, and all that I have is for your benefit and comfort. These are the Chambers provided for the Saints lodgings and into these they are invited to enter. *Enter thou into thy chambers.* By entring into them understand their actual faith exercised in acts of affiance, and resignation to God in all their dangers. So *Psal.* 56. 3. *At what time I am afraid* (said *David*) *I will trust in thee. q. d.* Lord, if a Storm come I will make bold to shelter my self from it under thy wings by faith; look as unbelief shuts the doors of all Gods Attributes and promises against us; so faith opens them all to the Soul, and so much of the priviledge invited to, which is the second thing.

3. We have here a needful caution for the securing of this priviledge to our selves in evil times, *shut thy doors about thee.* Or as the *Syriack* renders בעדך behind or after thee, *i. e.* faith *Calvin*, *Diligenter*

Diligenter cavendum ne ulla rimula diabolo ad nos pateat. Care must be taken that no passage be left open to the Devil to creep in after us and drive us out of our refuge; for so it falls out too often with Gods people, when they are at rest in Gods name or promises, *Satan* creeps in by unbelieving doubts and puzling objections, and beats them out of their refuge back again into trouble; it is therefore of great concernment in such times especially, *not to give place to the Devil*, as the phrase is, *Eph.* 4. 17. but cleave to God by a resolved reliance.

4. Lastly, we are to note with what Arguments or motives they are prest to betake themselves to this refuge. There are two found in the Text, the one working upon their *fear*, the other upon their *hope*.

1. That which works upon their *fear*, is a supposition of a storm coming, the indignation of God will fall like a tempest; this is supposed in the Text, and plainly expressed in the words following, *For the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth*, ver. 21.

2. The other is fitted to work upon their *hope*, though his indignation fall like a Storm, yet it will not continue long; it shall be but for a moment, better days and more comfortable dispensations will follow. From all which the general observation is this.

Doctrine.

That the Attributes, Promises, and Providences of God are the Chambers of rest and security, in which his people are to hide themselves, when they foresee the storms of his indignation coming upon the world.

The name of the Lord (saith *Solomon*) *is a strong Tower; the righteous run into it, and are safe, Prov.* 18.10.

18. 10. And his Attributes are his name, *Exod.* 34. 5. For by them he is known as a man is known by his name, and this his name is a ſtrong Tower for his peoples ſecurity; now what is the uſe and end of a Tower in a City, but to receive and ſecure the Inhabitants when the outworks are beaten to the ground, the walls ſcaled, and the houſes left deſolate?

And as it is here reſembled to a Tower, ſo in *Iſa.* 33. 16. Its ſhadowed out unto us by a munition of rocks, *His place of defence ſhall be a munition of rocks.* How ſecure is that perſon that is environed with rocks on every ſide? Yea you will ſay, but yet a rock is but a cold and barren refuge, though other enemies cannot, yet hunger and thirſt can invade and kill him there. No, in this rock is a ſtore-houſe of proviſion, as well as a magazine for defence; ſo it follows, *Bread ſhall be given him and his water ſhall be ſure.*

And ſometimes it is reſembled to us by the wings of a fowl, ſpread with much tenderneſs over her young for their defence, *Pſal.* 57. 1. *Yea, in the ſhadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until theſe calamities be overpaſt.* So *Pſal.* 17. 8. *Keep me as the apple of thine eye, hide me under the ſhadow of thy wings.* No part of the body hath more guards upon it, than the apple of the eye God is as careful to preſerve his people, as men are to preſerve their eyes; *and he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eyes.* But we need not go from one Metaphor to another, to ſhew you where the Saints refuge is in time of danger, you have a whole bundle of them lying together in that one Scripture, *Pſal.* 18. 2. *The Lord is my rock and my fortreſs, and my deliverer, my God, my ſtrength in whom I will truſt, my buckler, and the horn of my ſalvation, and my high tower.* Where you

you find all kinds of defence, whether natural, or artificial, under a pleaſant variety of apt Metaphors, aſcribed to God for the ſecurity of his people.

Now for the caſting of this great point into as eaſie and profitable a Method as I can; I ſhall reſolve this general truth into theſe following Propoſitions, which are implied or expreſſed in the Text and Doctrine thence deduced; and the firſt is this.

1. Propoſition.

That there are times and ſeaſons appointed by God for the pouring out of his indignation upon the world.

2. Propoſition.

That Gods own people are concerned in, and ought to be affected with thoſe Judgments.

3. Propoſition.

That God hath a ſpecial and particular care of his people in the days of his indignation.

4. Propoſition.

That God uſually premoniſhes the world, eſpecially his own people, of his Judgments before they befal them.

5. Propoſition.

That Gods Attributes, Promiſes, and Providences are prepared for the ſecurity of his people, in the greateſt diſtreſſes that befal them in the world.

6. Propoſition.

That none but Gods people are taken into theſe chambers of ſecurity, or can expect his ſpecial protection in evil times.

And then I ſhall apply the whole in the proper uſes of it.

CHAP. II.

Demonstrating the first Proposition, That there are times and seasons appointed by God for the pouring out of his indignation upon the world.

SECT. I.

THis is plainly implyed in the Text, that there are times of indignation appointed to befal the world; yea, and more than this; not only that such times shall come, but the duration and continuance is also under an appointment. *Hide thy self for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.* The Prophet tells us in *Zeph.* 2. 2. that these Stormy times are under a decree, and that decree is there compared to a pregnant Woman which is to go out her appointed months, and then to travel and bring forth: Even so it is in the judgments God brings upon the world. We see them not in the days of provocation, *sed adhuc fœtus in utero latet*, but all this while it is in the womb of the decree, and at the appointed season they shall become visible to the world. As there are in Nature fair Halcyon days, and cloudy, overcast, and stormy: So 'tis in providences, *Eccles.* 7. 14. *God hath set one over against the other.* Yea, one is the occasion of the other; for look as the Sun in a hot day exhales abundance of vapours from the Earth and Sea, these occasion showers thunder and tempests, and those again clear the Air, and dispose it to fair weather again. So it is here, Prosperity is the occasion

occasion of abundance of sin, this brings on adversity from the justice of God to correct it; adversity being sanctified, humbles, reforms, and purges the people of God, and this again by mercy procures their prosperity: So you find the account stated in *Psal.* 107. 17. *Fools because of their iniquities are afflicted, then they cry to the Lord in their troubles, and he saveth them out of their distresses.*

And this appointment of times of distress is both profitable and necessary for the world, especially Gods own people in it.

In general, hereby the Being and righteousness of God is cleared and vindicated against the Atheism and Infidelity of the world, *Psal.* 9. 16. *The Lord is known by the Judgments that he executeth.* Impunity is the occasion of many Atheistical thoughts in the world. *Jer.* 48. 11. *Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath setled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.* So *Psal.* 55. 19. *Because they have no changes therefore they fear not God.* Kingdoms, Families, and particular persons, like standing waters and ponds, are apt to corrupt by long continued peace and prosperity; the Lord therefore sees it necessary to purge the world by his judgments; *When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.* Those Sermons that God preaches from heaven by the terrible voice of his judgments, startle and rouze the secure world, more than all the warnings and exhortations of his Ministers could ever do: Those that slept securely under our Ministry, will fear and tremble under his rods; those that are without faith are not without sense and feeling, their own eyes will

affect their hearts, though our words could make no impreſſion on them.

SECT. II.

BUt of what uſe ſoever theſe National Judgments are to others, to be ſure they ſhall be beneficial to Gods own people; when others die by fear, they ſhall live by faith: If they be baneful poiſon to the wicked, they ſhall be healthful phyſick to the Godly. For,

1. By theſe calamities God will mortifie and purge their corruptions; this Winter weather ſhall be uſeful to deſtroy and rot thoſe rank weeds, which the Summer of proſperity bred, *Iſa.* 27. 9. *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged.* Phyſick in its own nature is griping and unpleaſant; but very uſeful and neceſſary to purge the body from noxious and malignant humours, which retained may put life it ſelf in hazard; and it is with the body Politick, as with the body Natural.

2. National Judgments drive the people of God nearer to him, and one to another; they drive the people of God to their knees, and make them pray more frequently, more fervently, and more feelingly than they were wont to do; in this poſture you find them in *ver.* 8, 9. of this Chapter. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee, the deſire of our ſoul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my ſoul have I deſired thee in the night, yea, with my ſpirit within me will I ſeek thee early.*

3. In a word, by theſe diſtractions and diſtreſſes of Nations, the people of God are more weaned from the world, and made to long more vehemently after heaven;

heaven; being now convinced by experience that this is not their reſt. When all things are tranquil and proſperous, Gods own people are but too apt to fall aſleep and dream of pleaſure and reſt on earth, to ſay as *Job* in his proſperity, *I ſhall die in my neſt, I ſhall multiply my days as the ſand.* And then are their heads and hearts filled with many projects and deſigns; to promote their comforts, and make proviſion for their accommodations on earth: The multiplicity of earthly cares and comforts take up their time and thoughts, too much, and make them that they mind death and eternity too little. But ſaith God, this muſt not be ſo, things muſt not go on at this rate, the proſperous world muſt not thus enchant my people; I muſt imbitter the earth that I may thereby ſweeten heaven the more to them; when they find no reſt below, they will ſurely ſeek it above.

Theſe and ſuch like are the gracious deſigns and ends of God in ſhaking the world by his terrible judgments; but yet, though National troubles muſt neceſſarily come, the wiſeſt of men cannot poſitively determine the preciſe time of thoſe judgments; we may indeed by the ſigns of the times diſcern their near approach; yet our judgment can be but probable and conjectural, ſeeing there are tacite conditions in the dreadfulleſt threatnings, *Jer.* 18. 7,8. *Jonah* 3. 9, 10. And ſuch is the merciful nature of God, that he oft times turns away his anger from his people, when it ſeems ready to pour down upon them, *Pſal.* 78. 38. The conſideration whereof no way indulges ſecurity, but encourages to repentance, and greater fervency in Prayer.

CHAP. III.

Opening and confirming the second Proposition, viz. *That Gods own people are much concerned in, and ought to be suitably affected with, those Judgments that befal the Nation wherein they live.*

SECT. I.

IF Gods people have no concernment in these things, why are they called upon in this Text, to run into their chambers, hide themselves, and shut their doors, till the indignation be overpast? Certainly though God hath better provided for them than others, yet they are two ways concerned in these cases as much as others. *Viz.*

1. Upon a Political
2. Upon a Religious } Account.

1. Upon a Political account, as they are members of the community, and so are equally concerned in the good or evil that befal the Nation in which they live, their Cabbins must follow the fate of the Ship in which they Sail, their Lives, Liberties, Estates, and Interest sink and swim with the publick. The good figs were carried away with the bad, *Jer.* 24. 5. In these outward respects it often times bears as hard upon the righteous as upon the wicked. *Ezek.* 21. 3. *I will draw forth my sword out of his Sheath and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.*

In

In theſe outward reſpects as it is with the good, ſo with the ſinner, *Eccleſ.* 9. 2. The ſame fire that burns the dry tree, oftentimes burns the green tree too. *Ezek.* 20. 47. Grace is above all hazards, but creature enjoyments and comforts are not. The ſins of the *Sodomites* involve not only their own houſes and eſtates, but *Lots* alſo, in the ruine and overthrow; wicked men often fare the better for the company of the godly, and the godly often fare the worſe for the company of the wicked.

And it is not to be wondered at, if we conſider that even the Saints themſelves have an hand in the provocation of theſe judgments, as well as others, *Deut.* 32. 19. *And when the Lord ſaw it he abhorred them, becauſe of the provoking of his ſons and of his daughters.* We have contributed to the common heap guilt, and therefore muſt juſtifie God if we partake with others in the common calamity.

2. They are greatly concerned in ſuch judgments upon a Religious and Chriſtian account, for it is uſual for the floud of Gods judgments not only to ſweep away our civil and natural, but our ſpiritual and beſt enjoyments and comforts. Thus the Ordinances of God ceaſed in *Babylon*, and there the faithful bewailed their miſery upon that account, *Pſ.* 137. *per totum*; *we wept when we remembred thee, O Zion.* Not only *Iſrael* flies, but the *Ark* is taken priſoner by the enemy, 1 *Sam.* 4. 11. And you find the people of God more deeply concerned upon this account, than for all their outward loſſes and other ſufferings, *Zeph.* 3. 18. *I will gather them of thee that are ſorrowful for the Solemn aſſemblies, to whom the reproach of it was a burthen.* For by how much our ſouls are more excellent than our bodies, and the concerns of Eternity over ballance thoſe of time; by ſo much more are

we concerned in the loſs of our ſpiritual, more than of our temporal mercies and enjoyments.

Grace indeed cannot be loſt, but the means and inſtruments by which it is begotten may; the golden candleſtick is one of the moveables in Gods houſe, *Rev.* 2. 5.

Thus you ſee a twofold concernment that the people of God have in the effects of National Judgments.

SECT. II.

THis being So, how ſhould all that fear God be affected with the appearances and ſigns of his indignation? So was *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 120. *My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* He that feared not a Bear, a Lyon, a *Goliah*, yet trembleth at Gods judgments. So did *Habakkuk*, *chap.* 3. *v.* 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenneſs entred into my bones.* Expreſſions denoting the deepeſt ſeizures of fear and greateſt conſternations; not that I would perſwade you to ſuch ſlaviſh fear, or unchriſtian dejection, as it is not only ſinful in it ſelf, but the cauſe and inlet of many other ſins: But to a due ſenſe both of the evils of miſery that will befal the Nation when Gods indignation comes upon it; and the evils of ſin that have incenſed it; and to ſuch a fear of both as may ſeaſonably awaken us to the uſe of all preventing remedies. And firſt,

1. O that all would lay to heart the National miſeries that Gods indignation threatens upon us. It is ſaid, *Pſal.* 107. 34. *A fruitful land is turned into barrenneſs for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.* It was long ſince told *England* by one of its faithful watch-

watchmen. * 'The Nation and Church * Mr. *Strong.*
'in which we are, is the common Ship in
'which we are all embarked, and if this in judgment be
'caſt away, whether daſhed againſt the rocks of any
'Foreign power, or ſwallowed up in the quick-
'ſands of Domeſtick diviſions, it muſt needs hazard
'all the Paſſengers: Or if you were ſure, that for
'your parts you might be ſafe; would it not be a
'bitter thing, to ſtand upon the ſhore, and ſee ſuch
'a glorious veſſel as this Nation is, to be caſt away?
'To ſee this glorious Land defaced, the bleſſed Goſ-
'pel polluted, the golden candleſtick removed, it
'cannot but affect men that have any bowels.

'Or if this move you not, yet to ſee a ſtranger to
'Lord it in thy habitation, and thy dwelling place
'to caſt thee out; for your delightſome dwellings,
'your fruitful pleaſant and well tilled fields to be
'made a prey; for you to ſow, and another to reap
'*Impius has ſegetes*; for the delicate woman upon
'whom the wind muſt not blow, to be expoſed to
'the luſt and cruelty of an enemy, and be glad to fly
'away naked to prolong a miſerable life, which they
'would be glad to part with for death, were it not
'for fear of the exchange. For the tender Mother
'to look upon the Child of her womb; and conſider,
'muſt this child in whom I have placed the hope of
'my age; for,

Omnis in Aſcanio ſtat chari cura parentis;

'He that hath been ſo tenderly bred up, muſt he fall
'into the rough hands of a bloudy Souldier, skilful to
'deſtroy. It had been well for me if God had
'given me dry breaſts, or a miſcarrying womb, ra-
'than to bring forth children unto murtherers; or
'if you might be ſafe, how could you endure to ſee
'the miſeries that ſhould come upon your people,

and

and the deſtruction of your kindred. Thus far he. But alaſs! What ſecurity have any of us as to our earthly comforts from the common calamity? We may pleaſe our ſelves as *Baruch* did, *Jer* 45. 4, 5. and dream of exemption, but by ſo much the greater will our diſtreſs be, when it ſhall ſurpriſe us.

2. You that are the people of God ought to be deeply affected with the ſpiritual miſeries that threaten us in the day of Gods indignation: do you conſider what the removing the Candleſtick out of its place is? A departing Goſpel, the going down of the Sun upon the Prophets, the loſs of your ſweet Sabbaths, and Goſpel Feaſts, and the groſs darkneſs of Popery to fill the earth: O it is hard parting with theſe things, it's ſaid, 1 *Sam.* 7. 2. when the *Ark* was removed, *that all the houſe of Iſrael lamented after the Lord.* Pity your own Souls, and be deeply affected with the miſery of others, the poor Chriſtleſs world, who are like to periſh for want of Viſion, *Prov.* 29. 18. In the Year 1072, ſaith *Matthew Paris*, Preaching was ſuppreſſed at *Rome*, and then Letters were framed by ſome as coming from hell; in which the Devil gives them thanks for the multitude of Souls ſent to him that year.

3. But eſpecially labour to affect your hearts with the ſins that have incenſed Gods indignation: So did the Saints in *Jeruſalem*, *Ezek.* 9. 4. they ſighed and mourned for all the abominations committed in it. So did *Lot*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7. *He vexed his righteous ſoul from day to day.* So did *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, becauſe men kept not thy law.* O who that loves God can refrain tears, to ſee the God of pity, the God of tender mercies, a father full of bowels of compaſſion, ſo incenſed and provoked to indignation! Oh it is an heart-melting

melting conſideration where there is any ingenuity. If our afflictions grieve God to the heart as it doth *Judg.* 10. 16. Our ſouls ſhould be grieved for his diſhonour.

4. To conclude, get upon your hearts ſuch a ſenſe of Gods indignation as may quicken you to the uſe of preventing duties. So *Amos* 4. 12. *Becauſe I will do this prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael.* So the Prophet, *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Gather your ſelves together before the decree bring forth.* It was *Moſes* his honour to ſtand in the breach, *Pſal.* 106. 23. And *Abraham's* to plead ſo with God, *though he did not prevail.*

CHAP. IV.

Confirming the third Propoſition. viz. *That God hath a ſpecial and peculiar care of his own in the days of his indignation.*

SECT. I.

PRopriety and Relation engages Care and Solicitude in times of Danger; we ſee God hath put ſuch a *Storge*, and inclination into the very creatures, that they will expoſe themſelves to preſerve their young; and it cannot be imagined that the fountain of Pity which dropt this tenderneſs into the bowels of the creatures, ſhould not abound with it himſelf; is there ſuch ſtrong inclination in the very birds of the air, that they will hazard their own lives to ſave their young? much more is God ſolicitous for his people. *Iſa.* 31.

5. *As*

5. *As birds flying, &c.* to their neſts when their young are in danger: *So will the Lord of Hoſts defend* Jeruſalem. No mother is more ſolicitous for her deareſt Child in danger and diſtreſs, than the Lord is for his people. *Iſa.* 49. 15. *Can a Woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* A woman [the more affectionate Sex forget her child] a piece of her ſelf, her ſucking child, which together with milk from the breaſt draws love from the heart. This may rather be ſuppoſed, than that the Lord ſhould forget his people.

Two things muſt here be cleared. 1. That it is ſo. 2. Why it is ſo.

1. That it is ſo will appear from,

1. Scripture Emblems.
2. Scripture Promiſes.
3. Scripture Inſtances.

1. Scripture *Emblems*, and among many, I will upon this occaſion ſingle out two or three principal ones. In *Ezek.* 5. 1, 2, 3. *And thou ſon of man take thee a ſharp knife, take thee a Barbers razor, and cauſe it to paſs upon thine head and upon thy beard, then take the balances to weigh and divide the hair; thou ſhalt burn with fire a third part in the midſt of the City, when the days of the ſiege are fulfilled, and thou ſhalt take a third part, and ſmite about it with a knife, and a third part thou ſhalt ſcatter in the wind; and I will draw out a ſword after them: Thou ſhalt alſo take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.* You find this truth ſhadowed out in this excellent Emblem; *Jeruſalem* the capital City is the head, the numerous inhabitants are the hair, the King

King of *Babylon* the Razor, the weighing it in balances, is the exactneſs of Gods procedure in Judgment with them; the fire, knife, and wind, are the various judgments to which the people were appointed; the hiding of a few in the Prophets skirt, is the care of God for the preſervation of his own remnant in the common calamity, this is one Emblem clearing this point. And then, in *Ezek.* 9. 3, 4. the ſame truth is preſented to us in another Emblem, as lively and ſignificant as the former. *And behold, ſix men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a ſlaughter weapon in his hand, and one among them was cloathed in linnen with a writers inkhorn by his ſide, and they went in and ſtood before the brazen Altar; and the glory of the God of Iſrael was gone up from the Cherub, whereupon he was, to the threſhold of his houſe, and he called to the man cloathed with linnen, which had the writers inkhorn by his ſide, And the Lord ſaid unto him, go through the midſt of the City, through the midſt of* Jeruſalem *and ſet a mark upon the foreheads of the men that ſigh, and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midſt thereof.* The men that had charge over the City are the *Angels* appointed for that Service, ſome with ſlaughter weapons whoſe work it was to deſtroy, but one among them had a writers inkhorn by his ſide, and he was imployed to take the names, and mark the perſons of Gods faithful ones among them, whom the Lord intended to preſerve and hide in that common overthrow and deſolation of the City, and theſe were to be all marked man by man before the deſtroying Angel was to begin his bloudy work. Oh ſee the tender care of God over his upright mourning ſervants! Once more, the ſame truth is repreſented in a third Emblem

blem, *Mal.* 3. 17. *And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord, in the day that I make up my jewels, and I will ſpare them as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him.* Where the world is compared to an houſe on fire; God to the maſter, and father of the family; the wicked to the uſeleſs lumber therein; the Saints to the children and jewels in the houſe; about theſe his firſt and principal care of preſervation is exerciſed, theſe he will be ſure to ſave, whatever become of the reſt. Thus you have the choſen Emblems that illuſtrate this comfortable truth.

2. As theſe Scripture Emblems illuſtrate it, ſo there are many excellent Scripture Promiſes to confirm it, *Iſa.* 32. 2. *A man ſhall be for an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt: as rivers of water in a dry place.* This man is the man Chriſt Jeſus, the tempeſt ſpoken of, are the miſeries and calamities of War, which make the land on which it falls, an hot, dry, and weary land; in the midſt and rage whereof, Chriſt ſhall be to his faithful ones a covert for protection, a river of water for ſupply, and a ſhadow for refreſhment, that is to ſay, whatſoever ſhall be neceſſary either for their ſafety or comfort. Chriſt is not only a ſhadow to his people from the wrath of God, but alſo from the rage of men. Again, *Zech.* 2. 5. *I will be a wall of fire round about.* Alluding to Travellers in the deſert, who to prevent danger from wild beaſts in the night, uſe to make a circular fire round about the place where they lie down to reſt, and this fire was as a wall to ſecure them. You have the like gracious promiſe alſo made to the poor captived Church in *Ezek.* 11. 16. *Although I have caſt them far off among the heathen, and ſcattered them among the countreys, yet will I be to them as a little ſanctuary in the countreys where they ſhall come.*

A

A little Sanctuary, the word is variouſly rendred and expounded, Some *Adverbially*, and render it *pauliſper*, a Sanctuary for a little while, *viz.* during their danger at the ſhortneſs of which this Adverb points, So *Junius*. Others *Adjectively*, as we tranſlate it, *Templum paucorum*, as *Votablus*, there were but a handful of them and God would be as a Sanctuary to ſecure and protect that remnant. מְעַט

3. And all theſe promiſes have in all ages been faithfully fulfilled to the Saints; you have an excellent Scripture for this, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4, 5, 6. when the floud was brought upon the old world, there was one *Noah* a righteous man in it, and for him God provided an Ark. When *Sodom* was overthrown, there was one *Lot* in it, a juſt man, and God ſecured him out of danger; upon which that comfortable concluſion is built, *ver.* 9. *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly.* When *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed a *Pella* was provided as a refuge for the godly there. Remarkable is that place to this purpoſe, *Iſa.* 25. 4. *Thou haſt been a ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, a refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat, when the blaſt of the terrible one is as a ſtorm againſt the wall.* And this hath God been not only once or twice, but in all ages, *Pſal.* 90. 1. *Lord thou haſt been our dwelling place in all generations.* Or as the Hebrew, in generations, and generations. What he hath been in former generations to his diſtreſſed people, that he is, and will be without alteration in all generations.

SECT.

Sect. II.

YEt we must remember, that all who are preserved in common calamities are not the people of God; nor are all that are indeed his people preserved: He hath people enough to divide into two ranks, as the Husbandman his corn, some for the mill, and some to reserve for seed. There be stars enough in the heaven to shine in both *Hemispheres*, and there are Saints enough in the world, some to shine in heaven, and some to preserve the Church on earth.

1. All that are preserved are not the people of God; in the Ark a wicked *Cham* was preserved and those that were preserved in *Egypt*, many of them were afterwards destroyed for their unbelief. *Jud.* 5. So in *Ezekiel*'s vision, a part even of those hairs which were spared, were afterwards cast into the fire, *Ezek.* 5. 4. Preservation from the dominion of sin, and the wrath to come, is peculiar to Gods own people; but as for temporal deliverances we cannot infer that conclusion.

2. Nor yet can we say that all Gods people shall be preserved; that promise *Zeph.* 2. 3. leaves it upon *a may be*, many a precious Christian hath fallen in the common calamity, they have been preserved in, but not from trouble.

But it is usual with God to preserve some in the sorest judgments: And the grounds of it are,

1. Because, some must be left as a seed to propagate and preserve the Church, which is perpetual and can never fail; he never so overthrows nations as *Sodom* was overthrown, *Isa.* 1. 9. this was the ground

ground of that promiſe, *Jer.* 30. 11. *For I am with thee, ſaith the Lord, to ſave thee, though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.* And of that plea, *Amos* 7. 2. *O Lord God, forgive I beſeech thee; by whom ſhall Jacob ariſe? for he is ſmall.* Except the Lord had left a ſmall remnant, we had been as *Sodom.* Remarkable to this purpoſe, is that Scripture, *Iſa.* 6. 13. *But yet in it ſhall be a tenth, and it ſhall return, and ſhall be eaten: As a Teyl-tree, and as an Oak whoſe ſubſtance is in them, when they caſt their leaves, So the holy ſeed ſhall be the ſubſtance thereof.* This preſerved remnant is the holy ſeed, by which the Church is propagated and continued, *Pſal.* 102. 28.

2. Becauſe, God will even in this world own and reward the fears and ſorrows of his people for the ſins of the times, and ſufferings of the Church, with the joy and comfort of better times, and a participation of *Sions* conſolation; ſo *Iſa.* 66. 10. *Rejoyce ye with* Jeruſalem, *ye that have mourned for her.* They that have ſown in tears, do ſometimes live to reap in joy, *Pſal.* 125. 6. they ſhall ſay as *Iſa.* 25. 9. *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he is come to ſave us.* And thoſe that live not to reap down in this world the harveſt of their own Prayers and tears, ſhall be no loſers; a full and better reward ſhall be given them in heaven, *Iſa.* 57. 22

3. Becauſe the preſerved remnant of Saints are they that muſt actually give unto God the glory of all his providential adminiſtrations in the world, both of judgments and mercies upon others, and towards themſelves. *They that go down to the pit do not celebrate his praiſe, the living, the living they praiſe him,* *Iſa.* 38. 18, 19. Thus when God turned back *Sion*'s captivity, the Remnant of Saints that were

preſerved, were they that recorded his praiſe, *Pſal.* 126. 1, 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter.* And fully to this ſenſe is that Scripture, *Pſal.* 102. 19, 20, 21. *He delivers thoſe that are appointed to death, i. e.* That men had doomed to death, *That they may declare the name of the Lord, in Sion, and his praiſe in* Jeruſalem.

4. The hiding of the Saints in evil days, is the greateſt diſcovery of the hand of God in the world; when he *hides* them he *ſhews* himſelf, and that, both to the Saints and to their enemies.

It is one of the moſt glorious myſteries of providence, that ever the world beheld, *viz.* the ſtrange and wonderful protection of poor helpleſs Chriſtians from the rage and fury of their mighty and malicious enemies; though they walk viſibly among them, yet they are, as it were, hid from their hands, but not from their eyes. So *Jer.* 1. 18. You find God made that Prophet among the envious Princes, and againſt an enraged and mighty King, *As a defenced City, and as an iron pillar, and as a brazen wall.* And indeed it was eaſier to them to conquer and take in the ſtrongeſt Fort or Gariſon, than that ſingle Perſon, who yet walked day by day naked and open among them. So *Luther* a poor Monk was made invincible, all the Papal power could not touch him, for God hid him. All the world againſt one *Athanaſius*, and yet not able to deſtroy him, for God hid him. This is the diſplay of the glorious power of God in the world, and he hath much honour by it.

Well then, if there be a God that takes care of his own in evil days, do not you be diſtractingly careful what ſhall become of you in ſuch times; you cannot ſee how it is poſſible for you to eſcape, but 2 *Pet.* 2. 4, 5, 6. the Lord knows how to deliver when

when you do not. Little did *Lot* know the way and manner of his preſervation, till God opened it to him, nor *Noah* till God contrived it for him: There was no way to be contrived by them for eſcape. He that knew how to deliver them, can deliver you alſo.

Leave your ſelves to Gods diſpoſe, it ſhall certainly be to your advantage; the Church is his peculiar care, *Iſa.* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

The more you commit your ſelves to his care, the more you engage it, *Iſa.* 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee.* He will certainly find a place of ſafety for his people under or in Heaven.

Neither be too much dejected when the number of viſible profeſſors ſeems but ſmall, think not the Church will periſh, when it is brought ſo low: This was *Elijah*'s caſe, he thought he had been left alone, that Religion had been preſerved in his ſingle perſon, as the *Phœnix* of the world; but ſee 1 *Kings* 19. 18. God hath enough left if we were in our graves to continue Religion in the world, it concerns him more than you to look to that.

CHAP. V.

Evincing the fourth Propoſition. viz. *That God uſually premoniſheth the World, eſpecially his own of his judgments before they befal them.*

Sect. I.

GOd firſt warns, and then ſmites, he delights not to ſurpriſe men when indignation was coming, he tells his people of it in the Text, and admoniſheth them to hide themſelves. *Surely the Lord will do nothing but he revealeth his ſecrets to his ſervants the Prophets, Amos* 3. 7. Thus when the flood was to come upon the old world, he gave them one hundred and twenty years warning of it, *Gen.* 6. 3. compared with 1. *Pet.* 3. 19. So when *Sodom* was to be deſtroyed, God would not hide it from *Abraham, Gen.* 18. 17. *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the thing that I do?* The like diſcovery was made unto *Lot, Gen.* 19. 12, 13, 14. So when the Captivity was at hand, *Ezekiel* was commanded to give the *Jews* ſolemn warning of it from God, *Ezek.* 3. 17. *Hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.*

And when their City and Temple was to be deſtroyed by the *Romans*, how plainly did Chriſt foretel them of it by his own mouth, *Luke* 19. 43. 44. *Thine enemies ſhall caſt a Trench about thee, and compaſs thee round and keep thee in on every ſide, and ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they ſhall not leave thee one ſtone upon another, becauſe thou knewеſt not the time of thy viſitation.*

tion. *Joſephus* alſo tells us that a little before the execution of this judgment upon them, a voice was heard in the temple, *Migremus hinc*, let us go hence, which voice *Tacitus* alſo in his Annals, mentions, *Audita major humana vox, excedere Deos, ſimul ingens motus excedentium.* It was more than an humane voice, telling them God was departing from them, and withal there was heard the ruſhing noiſe as of ſome that were going out of the Temple.

Joſephus de bel. Jud. lib. 7. c. 2. Tac. lib. 21.

And as there were extraordinary premonitions of approaching judgments by revelation to the Prophets of old, and ſigns from heaven; ſo there ſtill are ſtanding and ordinary rules by which the world may be admoniſhed of Gods judgments before they come upon them.

And the general rule, by which men may diſcern the indignation of God before it comes, is this;

☞ *When the ſame provocations, and evils are found in one Nation, which have brought down the wrath of God upon another nation; this is an evident ſign of Gods judgment at the door.* For God is unchangeably holy and juſt, and will not favour that in one people, which he hath puniſhed in another; nor bleſs that in one age, which he hath curſed in another. And therefore that which hath been a ſign of Judgment to one, muſt be ſo to all.

Here it is that the carcaſes of thoſe ſinners whoſe ſins had caſt them away, are as it were caſt up upon the Scripture ſhore, for a warning to all others that they ſteer not the ſame ill courſe they did. 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Now theſe things were our examples.* The *Iſraelites* are made examples to us, plainly intimating that if we tread the ſame path, we muſt expect the

ſame puniſhment. Let us therefore conſider what were the evils that provoked Gods judgments againſt his ancient people, whom he was ſo loth to give up, *Hoſ.* 11. 8. and ſo long ere he did give up, *Jer.* 15. 6. and we ſhall find by the concurrent accounts that the Prophets give,

1. That Gods worſhip among them was generally mixed and corrupted with their own inventions, for ſo it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 106. 40, 41. *they went a whoring with their own inventions.* And this ſo inflamed the wrath of God, who is a jealous God, and tender over his own honour, that he abhorred his own inheritance; yea, he expreſſes himſelf as a man doth whoſe heart is broken by the unfaithfulneſs of his wife, *Ezek.* 6. 9. Upon this account his profeſſing people became the generation of his wrath, *Jer.* 7. 29, 30.

2. Incorrigible obſtinacy under gentler correction, *Amos* 4. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Scarcity, Mildews, Peſtilence, and Sword had been upon them; and ſtill theſe that remained, though ſaved as a brand out of the fire, in which their fellow ſinners periſhed, would not return to God; and this haſtened on the general ruine, *ver.* 12. This preſages the ruine of Nations indeed.

3. Stupidity and ſenſeleſneſs of Gods hand was a ſad Omen, and cauſe of that peoples ruine; So *Iſa.* 26. 10, 11. *Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee.* No nor yet when his hand is laid on, *Iſa.* 42. 24, 25. It is not ſome ſmall drop of Gods anger that paſſes without obſervation, but the *fury of his anger; not ſome light skirmiſh of his judgments with them, but the ſtrength of battel.* Not in a corner upon ſome particular perſon, or family, but that which ſet him on fire round about; yet all this could not awaken them. *He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger,*

anger, and the ſtrength of battel, and it hath ſet him on fire round about, yet he knew it not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. Prodigious ſtupidity! to be in the midſt of flames, yea, to be ſeized by them, and deſtroyed ſooner than awakened. So you find again in *Hoſ.* 7. 9. *Gray hairs were here and there upon* Ephraim, *yet he knew it not.* Youth and Age are eaſily diſtinguiſhed, and gray hairs do plainly diſtinguiſh them, being the plain tokens of a declining State, yet they took no notice of them. Such ſtupidity is ever more the forerunner of miſery.

4. Perſecution of Gods faithful Miniſters and people, was another forerunning ſign of their ruine, 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. *They mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his Prophets until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy.* There were alſo a number of upright Souls among them, that deſired to worſhip God according to his own preſcription, but a ſnare was laid for them in *Mizpah*, and a net ſpread upon *Tabor*; and therefore was judgment towards that people, *Hoſ.* 5. 1. *Mizpah* and *Tabor* were places in the way lying betwixt *Samaria* and *Jeruſalem*, where the true worſhip of God was, and there were *Informers* or Spies ſet by the Prieſts to intercept ſuch as would venture to ſerve God at Jeruſalem according to his own preſcription, this alſo foreboded the judgments of God upon that nation.

5. The decay of the life and power of Godlineſs among them plainly foreſhewed their ruine at hand, *Hoſ.* 4. 18. *Their drink is ſour*, where under the *Metaphor* of dead and ſour drink which hath loſt its ſpirit and is become flat; their formal, heartleſs, and perfunctory duties are ſeverely taxed and condemned.

6. To conclude, the mutual animosities, and feuds among that professing people, evidently shewed judgment to be at the door. *Hos.* 9. 7. *The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come,* Israel *shall know it: the Prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.* This great hatred was one of the greatest sins, and saddest signs upon them. This Spirit of enmity sowed by the Devil among them hastened their calamity. If *Ephraim* will envy *Judah*, and *Judah* vex *Ephraim* the common enemy shall part the fray: when the whole Nation was under water, and the *Roman* Armies under the very walls of *Jerusalem*, their own Historians tell us, what bitter contentions and sharp conflicts continued among them to the very last. These things must be looked upon by all Wise and considerate men, no otherwise than we look upon Glazing Meteors, and Blazing Comets, portending judgment and ruine at the door. We have had indeed terrible Signs in Heaven, a dreadful rod of God shaken over us of late, which all men ought to behold with trembling: Yet I must say those Moral Signs of judgment forementioned, are much more terrible and portentous. According therefore to the evidence of these signs among us; let all upright hearts be affected and awakened with expectations of Gods righteous judgments. It is indeed below faith to expect evil days with despondency and distraction; but surely it is a noble exercise of Faith, so to expect them, as to make due preparation for them.

SECT.

SECT. II.

AND if we enquire for what End God gives ſuch warnings to the world, and premoniſhes them from Heaven, of the judgments that are coming on the earth, know that he doth it upon a threefold account.

1. To prevent their Execution.
2. To leave the Careleſs inexcuſable.
3. To make them more tolerable and eaſie to his own people.

1. Warning is given with deſign to prevent the execution of judgments; this is plain from *Amos* 4. 12. *Therefore will I do this unto thee*; there is warning given; *and becauſe I will do this, prepare to meet thy God O Iſrael:* There is the gracious deſign of preventing it, by bringing them ſeaſonably upon their knees at the foot of an angry God: You ſee the Lord expects it from all his Children, that they fall at his feet in deep humiliation, and fervent interceſſion whenever he goes forth in the way of judgment. What elſe was the deſign of God in ſending *Jonah* to *Nineveh* with that dreadful meſſage but to excite them to repentance, and prevent their ruine? This *Jonah* gueſſed at, and therefore declined the meſſage to ſecure his credit, well knowing, that if they took warning and repented, the gracious nature of God would ſoon melt into compaſſion over them: Free grace would make him appear as a liar among the people; for to that ſenſe his own words ſound, *Jonah* 4. 2. *Was not this my ſaying when I was yet in my*

my Countrey, Therefore I fled before unto Tarſhiſh, *for I knew that thou art a gracious God. q. d.* I thought before hand it would come to this; I knew how willing thou art to be prevented by repentance; therefore to ſecure my credit, I fled to *Tarſhiſh.*

2. He forewarns of judgments to leave the Incorrigible wholly inexcuſable, that thoſe who have neither ſenſe of Sin, nor fear of Judgment before, might have no cloak for their folly, nor plea for themſelves afterward; *What wilt thou ſay when he ſhall puniſh thee? Jer.* 13.21,22. *q. d.* What Plea or Apology is left thee after ſo many fair warnings? You cannot ſay you were ſurprized, before you were admoniſhed, or ruined before you were warned.

3. God warns of Judgments before they come to make them the more eaſie to his people when they come indeed; thus in *John* 16.4. Chriſt foretold his Diſciples of their approaching ſufferings, that when they came, they ſhould not be found amazed at them, or unprovided for them; for unexpected miſeries are aſtoniſhing to the beſt men, and deſtructive to wicked men, *Luke* 17.26,27,28.

Well then if it be ſo, let all that are wiſe in heart conſider the Signs of the times, and ſeaſonably hearken to Gods warnings. *The Lords voice crieth to the City, and the man of wiſdom ſhall ſee thy name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it, Mica.* 6.9. 'Tis our wiſdom to way-lay our troubles, and provide for the worſt eſtate, whilſt we enjoy the beſt: happy is he that is at once believing, and praying for good days, and preparing for the worſt. *Noah's* example is our advantage. *Heb.* 11.7. *Who by faith, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark.* Preventing mercies

are

are the moſt raviſhing mercies, *Pſal.* 59. 10. And preventing calamities are the ſoreſt calamities, *Amos* 9. 10.

And let us heartily bewail the ſupineſs and careleſneſs of the world in which we live, who take no notice of Gods warnings, but put the evil day far from them, *Amos* 6. 3. who will admit no *fear*, till they are paſt all *hope*; they ſee God houſing his Saints apace, yet will not ſee the evil to come from which God takes them, *Iſa.* 57. 1,2. *The righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come; he ſhall enter into peace, they ſhall reſt in their beds each one walking in his uprightneſs.* They hear the cry of ſin which is gone up to heaven, but cry not for the abominations that are committed, nor tremble at the judgments that they will procure.

O careleſs Sinners drowned in Stupidity, and ſleeping like *Jonah* under the Hatches, when others are upon their knees and at their wits end! do Saints tremble, and are you ſecure? Have not you more reaſon to be afraid than they? If judgments come, the greateſt harm it can do them, is but to haſten them to Heaven; but as for you, it may hurry you away to Hell: They only fear tribulation in the way; but you will not fear damnation in the end. Believe it Reader, in days of common calamity both Heaven and Hell will fill apace.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Demonſtrating the fifth Propoſition. viz. *That Gods Attributes, Promiſes, and Providences, are prepared for the ſecurity of his people in the greateſt diſtreſſes that befal them in the World.*

SECT. I.

HAving more briefly diſpatched the foregoing preliminary Propoſitions it remains that we now more fully open this fifth Propoſition, which contains the main ſubject matter of this Diſcourſe; here therefore our meditations muſt fix and abide, and truly ſuch is the deliciouſneſs of the ſubject to Spiritual hearts, that I judge it wholly needleſs to offer any other motive beſides it ſelf to engage your affections. Let us therefore view our *Chambers*, and ſee how well God hath provided for his Children in all their diſtreſſes that befal them in this world; it is our fathers voice that calls to us, *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers.* And the

1. *Chamber*,

Which comes to be opened as a Refuge to diſtreſſed Believers in a ſtormy day, is that moſt ſecure and ſafe Attribute of *Divine Power*; into this let us firſt enter by ſerious and believing meditation, and ſee how ſafe they are whom God hides under the protection thereof in the worſt and moſt dangerous days.

days. In opening this Attribute we ſhall conſider it,

1. In its own Nature and Property.
2. With reſpect to the Promiſes.
3. As it is actuated by Providence on the behalf of diſtreſſed Saints.

And then give you a comfortable proſpect of their ſafe and happy condition, who take up their lodgings by Faith in this Attribute of God.

1. Let us conſider the Power of God in it ſelf, and we ſhall find it repreſented to us in the Scriptures in theſe three lovely Properties, *viz.*

1. Omnipotent
2. Supreme
3. Everlaſting

} Power.

1. As an Omnipotent and All-ſufficient Power, which hath no bounds or limits, but the pleaſure and will of God, *Dan.* 4. 34, 35. *He doth according to his will in the armies of Heaven; and among the Inhabitants of the earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doſt thou?* So *Pſalm* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed that did he, in Heaven, and in Earth, in the Seas, and all deep places.* You ſee Divine pleaſure is the only rule according to which Divine Power exerts it ſelf in the world; we are not therefore to limit and reſtrain it in our narrow and ſhallow thoughts, and to think in this or in that the Power of God may help or ſecure us; but to believe that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Thus thoſe Worthies, *Dan.* 3. 17. by Faith exalted the power of God above the order and common rule of ſecond cauſes.

cauſes. *Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King.* Their faith reſting it ſelf upon the Omnipotent power of God, expected deliverance from it in an extraordinary way; 'tis true, this is no ſtanding rule for our faith ordinarily to work by; nor have we ground to expect ſuch miraculous Salvations, but yet when extraordinary difficulties preſs us, and the common ways, and means of deliverance are ſhut up, we ought by faith to exalt the Omnipotency of God, by aſcribing the glory thereof to him, and leave our ſelves to his good pleaſure, without ſtraitning or narrowing his Almighty power, according to the mold of our poor low thoughts and apprehenſions of it: For ſo the Lord himſelf directeth our faith in difficult caſes. *Iſa.* 55. 8, 9. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord; for as the Heavens are higher than the earth; So are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* He ſpeaks there of his pardoning mercy which he will not have his people to contract, and limit according to the model, and platform of their own deſponding, miſgiving and unbelieving thoughts; but to exalt and glorifie it, according to its unbounded fulneſs; as it is in the thoughts of God, the fountain of that mercy; ſo it ought to be with reſpect to his power, about which his thoughts and ours do vaſtly differ; the power of God as we caſt it in the mould of our thoughts, is as vaſtly different and diſproportionate from what it is in the thoughts of God the fountain thereof; as the earth is to the heavens, which is but a ſmall inconſiderable point compared with them.

2. The

2. The power of God is a Supreme and Sovereign power, from which all creature power is derived, and by which it is over-ruled, reſtrained, and limited at his pleaſure. *Nebuchadnezzar* was a great Monarch, he ruled over other Kings, yet he held his Kingdom from God; it was God that placed not only the Crown upon his head, but his head upon his ſhoulders. *Dan.* 2. 37. *Thou O King art a King of Kings; for the God of Heaven hath given thee a Kingdom, power, and ſtrength, and glory.* Hence it follows, that no creature can move tongue or hand againſt any of Gods people, but by vertue of a Commiſſion or permiſſion from their God, albeit they think not ſo. *Knoweſt thou not,* ſaith *Pilate* unto Chriſt, *that I have power to crucifie thee, and power to releaſe thee?* Proud worm! what an ignorant, and inſolent boaſt was this of his own power! and how doth Chriſt ſpoil and ſhame it in his anſwer? *John* 19. 10. *Thou couldeſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above.*

Wicked men like wild horſes would run over and trample under foot all the people of God in the world, were it not that the bridle of Divine providence had a ſtrong curb to reſtrain them: *Ezek.* 22. 6. *The Princes of* Iſrael *every one were in thee, to their power to ſhed bloud.* And it was well for Gods *Iſrael* that their power was not as large as their wills were; this world is a raging and boiſterous Sea, which ſorely toſſes the paſſengers for heaven that ſail upon it, but this is their comfort and ſecurity: *The Lord ſtilleth the noiſe of the ſea, the noiſe of the waves, and the tumult of the people,* *Pſ.* 65. 7. Moral as well as natural waves, are checked and bounded by Divine power. *Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, and the remainder of wrath thou ſhalt reſtrain, Pſal.* 76. 10. As a man turns ſo much

much water into the channel as will drive the mill, and turns away the reſt in another ſluce.

Yea, not only the power of man, but the power of Devils alſo is under the reſtraint and limitation of this power, *Rev.* 3. 10. *Satan ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days.* He would have caſt them into their graves, yea, into hell if he could, but it muſt be only into a Priſon: He would have kept them in priſon, till they had died and rotted there, but it muſt be only for ten days. Oh glorious Sovereign power! which thus keeps the reins of Government in its own hand!

3. The power of God is an everlaſting power; time doth not weaken or diminiſh it, as it doth all creature powers, *Iſa.* 40. 28. *The Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary, Iſa.* 59. 1. *The Lords hand is not ſhortened* (*i. e.*) He hath as much power now as ever he had, and can do for his people as much as ever he did; time will decay the power of the ſtrongeſt creature, and make him faint and feeble; but the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not. *Thou*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *abideſt for ever, thy years flee not, Pſal.* 102. 27. In Gods working there is no expence of his ſtrength. he is able to do as much as ever he did, to act over again all the glorious deliverances that ever he wrought for his people from the beginning of the World; to do as much for his Church now as he did at the Red ſea; and upon this ground the Church builds its Plea, *Iſa.* 51. 9, 10. *Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old, art thou not it that haſt cut* Rahab, *and wounded the Dragon?* *q. d.* Lord why ſhould not thy people at this day expect as glorious productions of thy power as any of them found in former ages?

SECT.

Sect. II.

Let us view the power of God in the vaſt extent of its operation, and then you will find it working beyond the line,

1. Of Creature power.
2. Of Creature expectation.
3. Of Humane probability.

1. Beyond the line of all created power, even upon the hearts, thoughts, and minds of men, where no creature hath any juriſdiction. So *Gen.* 31. 29. God bound up the Spirit of *Laban*, and becalmed it towards *Jacob*. So *Pſal.* 106. 46. *He made them alſo to be pitied of all them that carried them captives.* Thus the Lord promiſed *Jeremy*, *Jer.* 15. 11. *I will cauſe the enemies to entreat thee well, in the time of evil.* This power of God ſoftens the hearts of the moſt fierce and cruel enemies, and ſweetens the ſpirits of the moſt bitter and enraged foes of his people.

2. Beyond the line of all Creature expectations, *Eph.* 3. 20. *God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.* He doth ſo in *Spirituals*; as appears by thoſe two famous Parables, *Luke* 15. 19. 22. *And am no more worthy to be called thy ſon; make me as one of thy hired ſervants. But the Father ſaid to his ſervants, bring forth the beſt robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and ſhoes on his feet.* The Prodigal deſired to be but as an hired ſervant, and lo, the fatted Calf is killed for him, and muſick to his meat, and the gold

ring upon his finger. And in *Matth.* 18. 26, 27. The Debtor did but desire patience, and the Creditor forgave the Debt. O, thinks a poor humbled Sinner, if I might have but the least glimpse of hope, how sweet would it be! But God brings him to more than he expects, even the clear shining of assurance. It is so in *Temporals*, the Church confesses the Lord *did things they looked not for*, *Isa.* 64. 3. And in both Spirituals and Temporals this power moves in an higher Orb than our thoughts, *Isa.* 55. 8, 9. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my ways your ways; but as far as the heavens are above the earth, so are my thoughts above your thoughts*, The earth is but a *punctum* to the Heavens; all its tallest Cedars, Mountains, and Pyramids cannot reach it: He speaks, as was said before, of Gods pitying, pardoning, and merciful thoughts, and shews that no Creature can think of God, as he doth of the creature under sin, or under misery. Our thoughts are not his; either First by way of *simple cogitation* we cannot think such thoughts towards others in misery, by way of pity; or under sin against us by way of pardon, as God doth: Nor Secondly, are our thoughts as Gods in respect of *reflexive comprehension*; *i. e.* We cannot conceive or comprehend what those thoughts of God towards us are, when we fall into sin or misery; just as he thinks them, they are altered, debased, and straitened as soon as ever they come into our thoughts. See an excellent instance in *Gen.* 48. 11. *I had not thought to see thy face, and lo God hath shewed me all thy seed.* A surprizing providence; and thus the Divine power works in a Sphere above all the thoughts, prayers and expectations of men.

3. It works beyond all probabilities, and rational conjectures of men; this Almighty power hath exal-

ted

ted deliverances for the people of God when things have been brought to the loweſt ebb, and all the means of ſalvation have been hid from their eyes. We have diverſe famous inſtances of this in Scripture, wherein we may obſerve a remarkable *gradation* in the working of this Almighty power: It is ſaid in the 2 *Kings* 14. 26, 27. *The Lord ſaw the affliction of* Iſrael, *that it was very bitter, for there was not any ſhut up, nor any left; nor any helper for* Iſrael. A deplorable ſtate; how inevitable was their ruine to the eye of ſenſe? Well might it be called a bitter affliction; Yet from this immediate power aroſe for them a ſweet and unexpected Salvation; and if we look into 2 *Cor.* 1. 9, 10. we ſhall find the Apoſtles and choiceſt Chriſtians of thoſe times, giving up themſelves as loſt men, all ways of eſcape being quite out of ſight; for ſo much thoſe words ſignifie, *We had the ſentence of death in our ſelves*; *i. e.* We yielded our ſelves for dead men. But though they were ſentenced to death, yea, though they ſentenced themſelves, this power which wrought above all their thoughts, and rational conjectures, reprieved them. And yet one ſtep farther in *Ezek.* 37. 4, 5, 6, 7. The people of God are there repreſented as actually dead, yea as in their graves, yea as rotted in their graves, and their very bones dry, like thoſe that are dead of old; ſo utterly improbable was their recovery: Yet by the working of this Almighty power which ſubdueth all things to it ſelf, their graves in *Babylon* were opened, the breath of life came into them, bone came to bone, and there ſtood up a very great Army; it was the working of this power above the thoughts of mans heart, which gave the ground of that famous Proverb, *Gen.* 22. 14. *In the Mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen.* And the ground of that famous Promiſe, *Zech.*

14. 7. *At evening time it ſhall be light*; *i. e.* Light ſhall unexpectedly ſpring up, when all men according to the courſe and order of Nature, expect nothing but increaſing darkneſs. How extenſive is the power of God in its glorious operations!

SECT. III.

LEt us view the power of God in its relation to the promiſes, for ſo it becomes our Sanctuary in the day of trouble; if the *Power* of God be the *Chamber*, 'tis the *Promiſe* of God which is that Golden *Key* that opens it. And if we well conſult the Scriptures in this matter, we ſhall find the Almighty power of God made over to his people by promiſe, for many excellent ends and uſes in the day of their trouble. As,

1. To uphold and ſupport them, when their own ſtrength fails, *Iſa.* 41. 10. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not diſmayed for I am thy God: I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs.* And which of the Saints have not ſenſibly felt theſe everlaſting arms, underneath their ſpirits, when afflictions have preſſed them above their own ſtrength? So runs the promiſe to *Paul* in 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *My grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs*; *i. e.* It is made known in thy weakneſs. Our weakneſs adds nothing to Gods power, it doth not make his power perfect, but it hath the better advantage of its diſcovery, and puts forth it ſelf more ſignally and conſpicuouſly in our weakneſs; as the ſtars which never ſhine ſo glorioufly, as in the darkeſt night.

2. To

2. To preſerve them in all their dangers, to which they lie expoſed in Soul and Body. 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *You are kept* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *by the mighty power of God.* Kept as in a Gariſon; this is their arm every morning, as it is *Iſa.* 33. 2. *O Lord be gracious unto us, we have waited for thee, be thou their arm every morning, our ſalvation alſo in the time of trouble.* The Arm is that member which is fitted for the defence of the body, and for that end ſo placed by the God of Nature, that it may guard every part above and below it; but as good they were bound behind our backs, for any help they can give us in ſome caſes: It is Gods Arm that defends us, and not our own. This inviſible power of God makes the Saints the worlds wonder. *Pſal.* 71. 7. *I am as a wonder to many, but thou art my ſtrong refuge.* To ſee poor defenceleſs Creatures preſerved, in the midſt of furious enemies, that is juſt matter of wonder; but God being their inviſible refuge, that ſolves the wonder; to this end the Power of God is by promiſe engaged to his people, *Iſa.* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* And thus they ſubſiſt in the midſt of dangers and troubles; as the burning Buſh (the Emblem of the Church) did amidſt the devouring flames, *Exod.* 3. 3.

3. To deliver them out of their diſtreſſes, ſo runs the Promiſe, *Pſal.* 91. 14, 15. *Becauſe he hath ſet his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my name: he ſhall call upon me and I will anſwer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him.* And *Jer.* 30. 7. *Alas, for that day is great, ſo that none is like it: It is even the time of* Jacob's *trouble, but ye ſhall be ſaved out of it.* And ſurely

there can be no diſtreſs ſo great, no caſe of Believers ſo forlorn; but,

1. It's eaſie with God to ſave them out of it. Are they to the eye of Senſe loſt, as hopeleſs as men in the grave? Yet ſee *Ezek.* 37. 12. *O my people, I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of* Iſrael. And he doth whatever he doth eaſily, with a word, *Pſ.* 44. 4. *Thou art my king, O God, command deliverances for* Jacob. And it requireth no more violent motion to do it, than he that ſwimeth in the water uſes, *Iſa.* 25. 11. A gentle eaſie motion of the hand doth it.

2. And as the power of God can deliver them eaſily, ſo ſpeedily. Their deliverance is often wrought by way of ſurprizal, *Iſa.* 17. 14. *Behold, at even-ing tide trouble, and in the morning he is not.* So the Church prays, in *Pſ.* 126. 4. *turn again our captivity, as the ſtreams in the South.* The Southern Countreys are dry, the ſtreams there come not in a gentle and ſlow current, but being occaſioned by violent ſud-den ſpouts of Rain, they preſently overflow the Countrey, and as ſoon retire: So ſpeedily can the power of God free his people from their dangers and fears.

3. Yea, ſuch is the excellency of his delivering po-wer, that he can ſave alone without any contributi-on of Creature aids. So *Iſa.* 59. 16. *He wondered that there was no interceſſour; therefore his hand brought ſalvation unto him, and his righteouſneſs ſuſtained him.* We read indeed *Judg.* 5. 23. Of helping the Lord, but that is not to expreſs his *need*, but their *duty*; we have continual need of God, but he hath no need of us; he uſes inſtruments, but not out of neceſſity, his arm alone can ſave us, be the

danger

danger never ſo great, or the viſible means of deliverance never ſo remote.

4. Once more, let us view this Chamber of Divine power, as it is continually opened by the hand of providence, to receive and ſecure the people of God in all their dangers. 'Tis ſaid, 2 *Chro.* 16. 9. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in behalf of them, whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* Where you have an excellent account of the immediacy, univerſality, and efficacy of Divine Providence, as it uſes and applies this Divine power for the guard and defence of that people, who are its charge; he doth not only ſet Angels to watch for them, but his own eyes keep *Sentinel*, even thoſe ſeven eyes of Providence mentioned *Zech.* 3. 9. which *never ſleep nor ſlumber*; for they are ſaid to run continually to and fro, and that not in this or that particular place only, for the ſervice of ſome more eminent and excellent perſons; but through the whole earth. 'Tis an encompaſſing and ſurrounding providence which hath its eye upon all, whoſe hearts are upright; all the Saints are within the line of its care and protection; the eye of Providence diſcovereth all their dangers, and its arm defends them, for he ſhews himſelf ſtrong in their behalf.

The ſecret, but Almighty efficacy of Providence is alſo excellently deſcribed to us in *Ezek.* 1. 8. where the Angels are ſaid to have their hands under their wings, working ſecretly and undiſcernibly, but very effectually for the Saints committed to their charge. Like unto which is that in *Hab.* 3. 4. where it is ſaid of God, that *He had horns coming out of his hands, and there was the hiding of his power.* The hand is the inſtrument of action, denoting Gods active power, and

the horns coming out of them are the glorious raies and beams of that power ſhining forth in the ſalvation of his people: O that we could ſun our ſelves in thoſe chearful and reviving beams of Divine power, by conſidering how glorioufly they have broken forth, and ſhone out for the ſalvation of his people in all Ages. So it did for *Iſrael* at the Red Sea, *Exod.* 15.6. So for *Jehoſhaphat* in that great ſtreight, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12, 15. And ſo in the time of *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings* 19. 3. 7. Yea in all ages from the beginning of the World the Saints have been ſheltered under theſe wings of Divine Power, *Iſa.* 51. 9. 10. Thus Providence hath hanged and adorned this Chamber of Divine power with the delightful Hiſtories of the Churches manifold preſervations by it.

SECT. IV.

HAving taken a ſhort view of this glorious Chamber of Gods power abſolutely in it ſelf, and alſo in relation to his promiſes and providences, it remains now, that I preſs and perſwade all the people of God under their fears and dangers according to Gods gracious invitation to enter into it, ſhut their doors, and to behold with delight this glorious Attribute working for them in all their exigencies and diſtreſſes.

1. Enter into this Chamber of Divine power, all ye that fear the Lord, and hide your ſelves there in theſe dangerous and diſtreſsful days; let me ſay to you as the Prophet did to the poor diſtreſſed *Jews*, *Zech.* 9. 12. *Turn ye to your ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope.* Strong holds might they ſay; Why, where are they? The walls of *Jeruſalem* are in the duſt, the Temple burnt with fire, *Sion* an heap, what meaneſt thou

thou then in telling us of our ſtrong holds? Why, admit all this, yet there is *Satis præſidii in uno Deo*, Refuge enough for you in God alone, as *Calvin* excellently notes upon that place. Chriſtian, art not thou able to fetch a good ſubſiſtence for thy Soul by Faith, out of the Almighty power of God? The renowned Saints of old did ſo, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* met with as many difficulties and plunges of trouble in their time, as ever you did or ſhall meet with; yet by the exerciſe of their faith upon this Attribute, they lived comfortably, and why cannot you? *Exod.* 6. 3. *I appeared* (ſaith God) *unto* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *by the name of God Almighty.* They kept houſe and feaſted by Faith upon this name of mine; O that we could do as *Abraham* did, *Rom.* 4. 21. We have the ſame Attribute, but alas, we have not ſuch a Faith as his was to improve it. It is eaſie to believe the Almighty power of God in a calm, but not ſo eaſie to reſign our ſelves to it, and ſecurely reſt upon it in a Storm of adverſity: But oh what peace and reſt would our Faith procure us by the free uſe and exerciſe of it this way, to aſſiſt your faith in this difficulty wherein we find the faith of a *Moſes* ſometimes ſtaggered. Let me briefly offer you theſe four following encouragements.

1. Conſider how your gracious God hath engaged this his Almighty power by Promiſe and Covenant for the ſecurity of his people, God pawned it as it were to *Abraham* in that famous promiſe, *Gen.* 17. 1. *I am the Almighty God, walk thou before me, and be perfect.* And *Gen.* 15. 1. *Fear not* Abraham, *I am thy ſhield.* Say not, this was *Abraham*'s peculiar priviledge, for if you conſult *Hoſ.* 12. 4. and *Heb.* 13. 5, 6. you will find that Believers in theſe days, have as good a title to the promiſes made in thoſe days,

days, as thoſe worthies had to whom they were immediately made.

2. If you be Believers, your relation to God ſtrongly engageth his power for you, as well as his own promiſes, *Surely* (ſaith God) *they are my people, children that will not lie; ſo he became their Saviour, Iſa.* 63. 8. We ſay Relations have the leaſt of *Entity*, but the greateſt of *efficacy*; you find it ſo in your own experience, let a wife, child, or friend be in eminent danger, and it ſhall engage all the power you have to ſuccour and deliver them.

3. This glorious power of God is engaged for you by the very malice and wickedneſs of your enemies, who will be apt to impute the ruine of the Saints to the defects of power in their God; from whence thoſe excellent arguments are drawn, *Numb.* 14. 15, 16. *Now if thou ſhalt kill all this people as one man then the nations which have heard the fame of thee, will ſpeak, ſaying, becauſe the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land, which he ſware unto them, therefore he hath ſlain them in the wilderneſs.* And again, *Deut.* 32. 26, 27. you ſhall find the Lord improving this argument for them himſelf; if they do not plead it for themſelves, he will. *I would ſcatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to ceaſe from among men, were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, leſt their adverſaries ſhould behave themſelves ſtrangely and leſt they ſhould ſay, our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this.* O ſee how much you are beholding to the very rage of your enemies for your deliverances from them!

4. To conclude, the very reliance of your Souls by faith upon the power of God, your very leaning upon his arm engages it for your protection, *Iſa.* 26.

3. *Thou*

3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee.* Puzle not your ſelves therefore any longer about qualifications; but know that the very acting of your faith on God, the recumbency of your Souls upon him, is that which will engage him for your defence, how weak and defective ſoever thou art in other reſpects.

2. Having thus entered by Faith into this Chamber of Divine power, the next counſel the Text gives you is, to ſhut the door behind you, *i. e.* after the acting of your faith, and the quiet repoſe of your Souls upon Gods Almighty power, then take heed leſt unbelieving fears and jealouſies creep in again and diſturb the reſt of your Souls in God, you find a ſad inſtance of this in *Moſes*, *Numb.* 11. 21, 23. After ſo many glorious acts and triumphs of his Faith, how were his heels tripped up by diffidence which crept in afterwards; good men may be poſed with difficult providences and made to ſtagger. The *Iſraelites* had lived upon miracles many years, yet *Pſal.* 78. 20. *Can he give bread alſo?* Good *Martha* objects difficulty to Chriſt. *Joh.* 11. 39. *By this time he ſtinketh.* O 'tis a glorious thing to give God the glory of his Almighty power, in difficult caſes that we cannot comprehend. See *Zech.* 8. 6. *If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in theſe days, ſhould it be alſo marvellous in mine eyes? ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* Difficulties are for men, but not for God; becauſe it is marvellous in your eyes, muſt it be ſo in Gods: Various objections will be apt to ariſe in your hearts to drive you out of this your refuge. As,

1. *Objection.* O but the long continuance of our troubles and diſtreſſes will ſink our very hearts, *Iſa.* 40. 27. *Why ſayeſt thou,* O Jacob, *and ſpeakeſt,* O Iſra-

el,

el, *my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?*

Sol. But O wait upon God without fainting, *Heb.* 2. 3. *The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end of it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

2. *Objection.* O but our former hopes, and expectations of deliverance are frustrated, *Jer.* 8. 15. *We looked for peace, but no good came: and for a time of health, and behold trouble.*

Sol. O but yet be not discouraged, see how the *Psalmist* begins the 69 *Psal.* with *trembling*, and ends it with *triumph*; the husbandman waiteth, and so must you.

3. *Objection.* But there is no sign or appearance of our deliverance.

Sol. What then, this is no new thing, *Psal.* 74. 9. *We see not our signs, there is no more any Prophet, neither is there any among us that knoweth how long.*

4. *Objection.* But all things work contrary to our hope.

Sol. Why, so did things with *Abraham*, yet see *Rom.* 4. 18. *against hope, he believed in hope.*

3. Observe further with delight the outgoings and glorious workings of Divine power for you, and for the Church in times of trouble; this is sweet entertainment for your Souls, 'tis food for Faith, *Psal.* 74. 14. *Thou breakest the heads of* Leviathan *in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness*, and here I beseech you behold and admire,

1. It's mysterious and admirable protection of the Saints in all their dangers. They feed as Sheep in the midst of Wolves, *Luke* 10. 3. they lie among them that

that are ſet on fire, *Pſal.* 57. 4. *Their habitation is in the midſt of deceit. Jer.* 9. 6. Yet they are kept in ſafety by the mighty power of God.

2. Behold and admire it in caſting the bonds of reſtraint upon your enemies, that though they would, yet they cannot hurt you; our dangers are viſible, and our fears great, but our ſecurity and ſafety admirable, *Iſa.* 51. 13. *Thou haſt feared continually every day, becauſe of the fury of the oppreſſour, as if he were ready to deſtroy; and where is the fury of the oppreſſour?*

3. Behold its opening unexpected, and unlikely refuges and ſecurities for the Saints in their diſtreſſes, *Iſa.* 16. 4. *Let mine out-caſts dwell with thee,* Moab, *be thou a covert to them from the face of the ſpoiler; for the extortioner is at an end, the ſpoiler ceaſeth, the oppreſſors are conſumed out of the land. Rev.* 12. 16. *the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed up the floud which the Dragon caſt out of his mouth.*

4. Behold it fruſtrating all the deſigns of our enemies againſt us, *Iſa.* 54. 17. *no weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper, and every tongue that ſhall riſe againſt thee in judgment thou ſhalt condemn. Behold, I have created the Smith, Iſa.* 54. 16. *q. d.* He that created the Smith, can order as he pleaſeth the weapon made by him; hence our enemies are not maſters of their own deſigns.

O then depend upon this power of God, for it is your ſecurity; there is a twofold dependence, the one Natural and neceſſary, the other Elective.

1. Natural dependance, ſo all do and muſt depend upon him.

2. Elective and voluntary, and ſo we all ought to depend upon him; and for your encouragement take

take this Scripture, *Pſal.* 9. 9, 10. *The Lord alſo will be a refuge for the oppreſſed, a refuge in times of trouble, and they that know thy name will put their truſt in thee; for thou Lord, haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee.* And thus of the firſt Attribute of God, prepared for the ſafety of his people in times of trouble.

CHAP. VII.

Opening that glorious Attribute of Divine Wiſdom as a ſecond Chamber of ſecurity to the Saints in difficult times.

SECT. I.

THe next Chamber of Divine Protection into which I ſhall lead you, is the *Infinite Wiſdom of God*; I call it the next, becauſe I ſo find it placed in Scripture, *Job* 36. 5. *He is mighty in power and wiſdom. Dan.* 2. 20. *Wiſdom and might are his.*

This Attribute may be fitly called the *Council Chamber* of Heaven, where all things are contrived in deepeſt wiſdom, which are afterwards wrought in the world by power, *Eph.* 1. 11. *He worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.* Counſel in the Creature implies weakneſs and defect; we are not able at one thought to fathom the depth of a buſineſs, and therefore muſt deliberate and ſpend many thoughts about it, and when we have ſpent all our own thoughts we are oft times at a loſs, and muſt borrow help, and ask counſel of others; but in God

God it notes the perfection of his understanding, for as those acts of the creature which are the results of deliberation and counsel, are the height and top of all rational contrivement; so in its accommodation to God, it notes the excellent results of his infinite and most perfect understanding.

Now this wisdom of God is to be considered either,

Absolutely,
or,
Relatively.

1. Absolutely in it self, and so it is, *That, whereby he most perfectly and exactly knows himself, and all things without himself, ordering and disposing them in the most convenient manner to the glory of his own name.*

Wisdom comprehends two things, 1. Knowledge of the natures of things, which in the creature is called *Science.* 2. Knowledge how to govern, order and dispose them, which in the Creature is called *Prudence*; these things in man are but faint shadows of that which is in God in the most Absolute perfection; he fully knows himself, for his understanding is infinite, *Psal.* 147. 5. And the thoughts he thinks towards us, *Jer.* 29. 11. and as he perfectly understands himself, so likewise all things that are without himself, *Act.* 15. 18. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.* Together with all the secret designs, thoughts, and purposes which lie hid from all others in the inmost recesses of mens hearts, *Psal.* 139. 2.

And as he perfectly knows all things, so he fully understands how to govern and direct them to the best end, even the exalting of his own praise, *Psal.*

104. 24. *Rom.* 11. 36. *for of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* Of him, as the *efficient cauſe*; through him, as the *conſerving cauſe*; and to him as the *final cauſe.* And in this wiſe diſpoſition of all things, he hath a gracious reſpect to the good of his choſen, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* More particularly, the wiſdom of God is to be conſidered by us in its excellent properties, amongſt which theſe four following are eminently conſpicuous, as it is the,

1. Original.
2. Eſſential.
3. Perfect, and
4. Only wiſdom.

1. The wiſdom of God is the Original Wiſdom, from which all the Wiſdom found in Angels or men is derived, and unto that fountain we are directed to go, for ſupplies of Wiſdom, *Jam.* 1. 5. *If any man lack wiſdom, let him ask it of God.* There is indeed a ſpirit in man, but it is the inſpiration of the Almighty that giveth underſtanding, *Job* 32. 8. The natural faculty is ours, but the illumination thereof is Gods; the underſtanding of the Creature is as the *Dial* which ſignifies nothing, till the Sun ſhine upon it.

2. Gods Wiſdom is Eſſential Wiſdom. Wiſdom in the Creature is but a quality ſeparable from the ſubject; but in God it is his Nature, his very Eſſence, he can as ſoon ceaſe to be God, as to be moſt wiſe.

3. The Wiſdom of God is perfect wiſdom, full of it ſelf, and excluſive of its contrary; the wiſeſt of men are not wiſe at all times, the greateſt wits are not

not without ſome mixture of madneſs; it is an high attainment in humane wiſdom to underſtand our own weakneſs and folly; the deepeſt heads are but ſhallows, but the wiſdom of God is an unſearchable deph, *Rom.* 11. 33. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God, how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out?*

4. To conclude, The wiſdom of God is the only wiſdom; there is no wiſdom without him, none againſt him, he is the only wiſe God, *Jude v.* 25.

2. The Wiſdom of God muſt be conſidered *Relatively*, and that in a double reſpect:

1. To his Promiſes.
2. To his Providencs.

SECT. II.

LEt us view it in its relation to the Promiſes, where you ſhall find it made over by God to his people for divers excellent uſes and purpoſes in times of diſtreſs and danger. As,

1. It is made over to them in Promiſes for their direction and guidance when they know not what to do, or which way to take. So *Pſal.* 25. 9. *The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way, And Iſa.* 58. 11. *The Lord ſhall guide thee continually.* And *Pſal.* 32. 8. *I will guide thee with mine eye.* And with this the *Pſalmiſt* encourages himſelf, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory.* O what an invaluable mercy is this! we ſhould make Shipwrack both of our Temporal and Eternal mercies quickly, were it not for the guidance of Divine Wiſdom.

2. To Extricate them when involved in difficulties: So 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.* They know not how, but their God doth; they are often at a loss, but he is never: So 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it.*

3. To over-rule and order all their troubles to their good, and real advantage: So runs that most comprehensive promise, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things shall work together for good to them that love God.* In the faith whereof Paul concludes, *Phil.* 1. 19. Even this shall work for his Salvation. Thus the people of God were sent into captivity for their good, *Jer.* 24. 8. and *Joseph* into *Egypt*, *Gen.* 50. 20. *Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

2. Let us view the Wisdom of God in its Relation to his Providences, for there it shines forth eminently, *Ezek.* 1. 18. The wheels were full of eyes, *i. e.* the motions and Providential revolutions in this lower world, are very Judicious and advised motions, *Non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ*, It hath a fetch and design which no man understands till it open it self in the event.

The enemies of the Church are oft times men of the finest brains, and deepest policies: *Herod* a Fox for subtilty, *Luke* 13. 32. *Julian* and *Ahithophel* with many others, who have digged as deep as Hell in their counsels, and laid their designs so sure, that they doubted not but to be masters of it, yet their hands could not perform their enterprize.

The

The wiſdom of Providence hath ſtill befooled them, and baffled the cunningeſt head-pieces that ever undertook any deſign againſt the Church, as faſt as ever they aroſe; and here the Wiſdom of Providence is remarkable in three things eſpecially.

1. In revealing and diſcovering the ſecret conſpiracies and counſels of the Churches enemies, and thereby fruſtrating their deſigns, *Gen.* 27.41, 42. *Providence* (as one calls it) is the Bird of the air that carries tidings, and whiſtles deeds of darkneſs, *Job* 12.22. *He diſcovereth deep things out of darkneſs, and bringeth out to light the ſhadow of death.* And this God hath done both *immediately* and *mediately*. 1. Immediately, 2 *Kings* 6. 11. What counſel ſoever the King of *Syria* took in his Bed-chamber was ſtill diſcovered by the Lord to the Prophet. So true is that *Job* 34. 22. *There is no darkneſs nor ſhadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themſelves.* Thus the deſign of *Herod* is revealed to *Joſeph* in a dream.

But commonly he doth it by means; as

1. By giving knowledge of it to ſome that are under obligations of duty, or affection to reveal it to theſe that are concerned in the danger. So *Paul*'s Siſters Son, *Acts* 23. 16. revealed the conſpiracy againſt his life, and ſo the Plot miſcarried by revealing it before it was ripe for execution.

2. By the failure of ſome circumſtance, the whole is brought to light; there be many fine threds upon which the deſigns of Politicians hang, if one break the whole deſign is unravelled. Thus the Wiſdom of God ſometimes prevents his peoples ruine, by taking away the ſpeech of the truſty from him, and making their own tongues to fall upon themſelves.

3. By their own confession; So *Psal.* 64. 5, 6, 7, 8. where you have the Plot laid, *ver.* 5. *They encourage themselves in an evil matter, they commune of laying snares privily, they say, who shall see them?* The deep *contrivance* of it, *ver.* 6. *They search out iniquity, they accomplish a diligent search; both the inward thoughts of every one of them, and the heart is deep.* Their Plot *destroyed*, *ver.* 7. *But God shall shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded.* The *method* or way of Providence in destroying it, *ver.* 8. *So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves, all that see them, shall flee away.* Thus hath the Wisdom of our God wrought for us this day beyond all the thoughts of our hearts; and oh that it might make such impressions upon all our hearts, as follow in the 9, and 10. *verses*, *All men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God, for they shall wisely consider his doing. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord and shall trust in him, and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

2. The Wisdom of God discovers it self in behalf of that people who are his own, in diverting the danger from them, and putting by the deadly thrusts their enemies make at them; thus it spoils their game by an unforeseen rub in the green, and that especially three ways.

1. By making their counsels to jar among themselves, in which jars is the sweetest harmony of providence; thus the counsel of *Ahithophel* jars with the counsel of *Hushai*, 2 *Sam.* 17. 5. 7. by which means *David* escaped: the *Pharisees* clashed with the *Sadducees*, *Acts* 23. 7. and by that means *Paul* escaped.

2. By cutting out other work, and starting some new design which like a fresh scent puts the dogs to a loss.

loſs. Thus the people of God in *Jeruſalem* were delivered by a diverſion, 2 *Kings* 19. 7. *Behold, I will ſend a blaſt upon him, and he ſhall hear a rumour and ſhall return to his own land, and I will cauſe him to fall by the ſword in his own land, ſo* Rabſhakeh *returned.* By this means alſo was *David* delivered from the hand of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 23. 27. And in this method of Providence, that Scripture is often fulfilled, *Prov.* 21. 18. *The wicked ſhall be a ranſom for the Righteous, and the tranſgreſſour for the upright.*

3. By cutting off the capital enemies of his Church, by whoſe ſeaſonable deſtruction they are delivered. Thus fell *Julian*, that bitter enemy of the Chriſtians, when he was preparing to put his laſt and moſt bloudy deſign againſt them in execution. And thus fell *Haman*, *Nero*, and many more in the very height and heat of their deſigns againſt the Church.

3. The Wiſdom of God gloriouſly diſplays it ſelf in cauſing the deſigns of the wicked, like a ſurcharged gun to recoil upon and deſtroy themſelves: It often falls out with the undermining enemies of the Church, as it ſometimes doth with them that dig deep *Mines* in the Earth, who are deſtroyed and buried in their own work; *Pſal.* 9. 15, 16. *The heathen are ſunk down in the pit that they made, in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth, the wicked is ſnared in the work of his own hands. Higgajon, Selah.* There is a double mercy in this providence, one in delivering the Saints from the danger, the other in cauſing it to fall upon the contrivers, and is therefore celebrated with a double note of attention; in theſe obſervable ſtrokes, the righteouſneſs of God

shines forth, in repaying his peoples enemies in their own coin.

——nec lex est justior ulla,
quam necis Artifices arte perire sua.

Thus *Haman* did eat the first-fruits of that tree which his own hands planted, and thus *Jerusalem* becomes a burthensome stone to all that burthen themselves with it, *Zech.* 12. 3.

4. Admire and adore the Wisdom of your God in those great and unexpected advantages, which arise to you out of those very dangers and designs of your enemies that threatened your ruine; the very hands of your very enemies are sometimes made the instruments of your advancement and enlargement; your persecutions become your priviledges, the Motto of the *Palm* tree fitly becomes yours, *Suppressa Resurgo.*

In three things the Wisdom of God makes advantage out of your troubles.

1. In fortifying your Souls and Bodies with suitable strength, when any eminent trial is intended for you: So it was with the Apostles, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation by Christ.* God lays in suitably to what men lay on mercilesly: Christ would not draw the poor timorous disciples out of *Jerusalem* unto hard encounters, until first he had endued them with power from on high, *Luke* 24. 49.

2. The Wisdom of your God can and often doth make your very troubles and sufferings instead of so many ordinances to strengthen your Faith and fortifie your Patience. So the heads of *Leviathan* became meat to his people inhabiting the Wilderness, *Psal.* 74. 14. And so the Plots of *Balak* and *Balaam*

laam were designed by God to be as a standing instructing ordinance for the encouragement of his peoples Faith in future difficulties, *Micah* 6. 5. *O my people remember now what* Balak *King of* Moab *consulted, and what* Balaam *the son of* Beor *answered him from* Shittim *unto* Gilgal *that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord. q. d.* You cannot but remember how those your enemies courted me with multitudes of Offerings to deliver you up into their hands, and how faithfully I stood by you in all those dangers; that Plot discovered at once the policy of your enemies, and the righteousness of your God.

3. His Wisdom is discovered to your advantage in permitting your dangers to grow to an extremity, on purpose to magnifie his goodness, and increase your comfort in your deliverance from it: *Psal.* 126. 1. *When the Lord turned our captivity we were as them that dreamed.* Proportionable to the greatness of your dangers will your joys be.

Sect. III.

WEll then, if the Wisdom of God shines forth so gloriously in the times of his peoples trouble; be perswaded by Faith to enter into this Chamber also; it is a Chamber where a believing Soul may enjoy the sweetest rest, and quietness in the most hurrying and distracting times; shut the door behind you, and improve this Attribute to your best advantage.

1. Enter into this Chamber by Faith, believe firmly that the management of all the affairs of this world, whether publick or personal, is in the hands of your All wise God; more particularly, exercise your faith about the Wisdom of God in these things.

1. Believe that the Wisdom of God can contrive and order the way of your escape and deliverance, when all doors of hope are shut up to sense and reason; we know not what to do, said good *Jehoshaphat*, but our eyes are unto thee. *q. d.* Lord though I am at a loss and see no way of escape, thou art never at a loss. The Lord (saith *Peter*) knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptation: Divine wisdom hath infinite methods and ways of deliverance unknown to man, till they are opened in the event.

2. Believe that the Wisdom of God can turn your greatest troubles and fears into the choicest blessings and mercies to you: I know (saith *Paul*) that this shall turn to my Salvation, *Phil.* 1. 19. meaning his bonds and sufferings for Christ. Divine wisdom can give you honey out of the carcase of the Lyon, cause you to part with those afflictions, admiring and blessing God for them, which you met with fear and trembling, as suspecting your destruction was imported in them.

3. In consideration of both these, resign up your selves to the wisdom of God, and lean not to your own understandings; *Commit thy way unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established, Prov.* 16. 3. When *Melancthon* was oppressed with cares and doubts about the distracting affairs of the Church in his time, *Luther* thus chides him out of his despondency, *Desinet Philippus esse rector mundi*, do not thou presume to be the Governour of the world; but leave the reins of Government in his hand that made it, and best knows how to rule it: Let God alone to chuse thy lot and portion, to order thy condition, and manage all thy affairs, and let thy Soul take its rest in this quiet Chamber of Divine wisdom. But then,

2. Be

2. Be ſure to ſhut thy door behind thee, and beware leſt unbelief, anxieties, fears, and doubts creep in after thee to diſturb thy reſt, and ſhake thy faith in this point; we are apt in two caſes to be ſtumbled in this matter.

1. When ſubtle and cunning enemies are engaged againſt us; this was *Davids* caſe, 2 *Sam.* 15. 31. *One told* David, *ſaying*, Ahithophel *is among the conſpirators with* Abſalom; *and* David *ſaid, O Lord. I pray thee turn the counſel of* Ahithophel *into fooliſhneſs.* When he heard *Ahithophel* was with the Conſpirators, it greatly puzled him. Though a whole Conclave of *Politicians* be againſt us, yet if God be with us let us not fear.

2. When our own reaſon intrudes too far, and offers its dictates too boldly in the caſe, we are apt to ſay in the arrogancy of our own reaſon, we cannot be delivered; but O that we would learn to reſign it up to the Wiſdom of God. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly. When the queſtion was asked the Prophet, *Ezek.* 37. 3. Can theſe dry bones live? He anſwers, Lord thou knoweſt. That's excellent counſel, *Prov.* 3. 5. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own underſtanding.*

3. Improve the Wiſdom of God for your ſelves in all difficult and diſtreſsful caſes.

1. Beg of God to exerciſe his wiſdom for you when enemies conſpire againſt you: So did *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 31. *Lord turn the counſel of* Ahithophel *into fooliſhneſs!* O 'tis the nobleſt and ſureſt way to vanquiſh an enemy; it was but asked and done.

2. Comfort your ſelves with this whenever you are at a loſs in your own thoughts and know not what to do, then commit all to Divine conduct; let God

Steer

Steer for you in a Storm; he loves to be truſted, *Pſal.* 37. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.*

3. Encourage your ſelves from this when the Church is in the greateſt danger, and moſt ſorely ſhaken; O that is a bleſſed promiſe, *Zech.* 3. 9. *Upon one ſtone ſhall be ſeven eyes.* Meaning Chriſt, and the Church built on him as the chief corner ſtone; the ſeven eyes are the ſeven eyes of Providence which are never all aſleep.

CHAP. VIII.

Opening that glorious Attribute of Divine Faithfulneſs as a third Chamber of Security to the people of God in times of diſtreſs and danger.

SECT. I.

HAving viewed the Saints Refuge in the Power and Wiſdom of God, we next proceed to a third Chamber of Safety for the Saints refuge. *viz.* The *Faithfulneſs* of God.

In this Attribute is our Safety and Reſt amidſt the confuſions of the world and daily diſappointments we are vexed withal through the vanity and falſeneſs of the Creature: As to Creatures, the very beſt of them they are but vanity, yea, vanity of vanity, the vaineſt vanity, *Eccleſ.* 1. 2. *Every man in his beſt eſtate is altogether vanity, Pſal.* 39. 5. Yea, thoſe that

that we expect moſt from, give us moſt of trouble, *Micah* 7. 5. Neareſt Relations bring up the rear of ſorrows, *Job* 6. 15. *My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook.* Eſpecially their deceit appears moſt when we have moſt need of their help, *Pſal.* 142. 4. How great a mercy is it then to have a refuge in the Faithfulneſs of God, as *David* had, *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my ſoul.* And likewiſe the Church, *Micah.* 7. 7. *I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my ſalvation, my God will hear me.* A time may come when you ſhall not know where to truſt in all this world: Let me therefore open to you this Chamber of reſt in the Faithfulneſs of God, againſt ſuch a day, and this I ſhall do in a two fold conſideration of it. *viz.*

1. Abſolutely in its own Nature.
2. Relatively in the Promiſes and Providences of God.

1. Abſolutely, and ſo the Faithfulneſs of God is his ſincerity, firmneſs, and conſtancy in performing his word to his people in all times and caſes. So *Moſes* deſcribes him to *Iſrael*, *Deut.* 7. 9. *Know therefore that the Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God.* And *Joſhua* appeals to their experience for the vindication of it, *Joſh.* 23. 14. *Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you; all are come to paſs, and not one thing hath failed thereof.* And it is alſo fully aſſerted, *Jer.* 31. 35, 36, 37. and greatly admired even in the darkeſt day, *Lam.* 3. 23. *Great is thy faithfulneſs.* And it is well for us that his faithfulneſs

neſs is great, for great is that weight that leans upon it, even all our hopes for both worlds, for this world, and for that to come, *Tit.* 1. 2. *In hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promiſed before the world began.*

It was a very diſhonourable character that *Suidas* gave of *Tiberius*, *Eorum quæ appetebat ne quicquam præ ſe ferebat, & eorum quæ dicebat, ne quicquam facere volebat. i. e.* He never made ſhew of having what he deſired to have, nor ever minded to do what he promiſed to do: But God is faithful, and that will appear by theſe following Evidences of it.

1. *Evidence.*

By his exact fulfilling of his Promiſes of the longeſt date. So *Acts* 7. 6. Four hundred and thirty years were run out before the Promiſe of *Iſrael*'s deliverance out of *Egypt* was accompliſhed, yet *Acts* 7. 17. when the time of the Promiſe was come, God was punctual to a day: Seventy years in *Babylon*, and at the expiration of that time they returned, 2 *Chron.* 36. 21. Men may forget, but God cannot, *Iſa.* 49. 15, 16.

2. *Evidence.*

By making way for his Promiſe through the greateſt difficulties, and ſeeming impoſſibilities. So to *Abraham* when old, *Gen.* 18. 13, 14. *Is there any thing too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time will I return unto thee, according to the time of life; and* Sarah *ſhall have a ſon.* And likewiſe to the *Iſraelites*, Can theſe dry bones live? *Ezek.* 37. 3. Difficulties are for men, not God, *Gen.* 18. 14. What art thou O great

great Mountain, *Zech.* 8.6. *If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people, ſhould it alſo be marvellous in mine eyes? ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

3. *Evidence.*

By fulfilling promiſes to his people, when their hopes and expectations have been given up. So *Ezek.* 37. 11. Our bones are dry, our hopes loſt, we are cut off for our part. And *Iſa.* 49.14. *Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.* There may be much unbelief in good men, their faith may be ſorely ſtaggered, yet God is faithful, men may queſtion his promiſes, yet God cannot deny himſelf, 2. *Tim.* 2. 13.

4. *Evidence.*

By Gods appealing to his people and referring the matter to their own judgments, *Micah* 6. 3, 4, 5. *O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Teſtifie againſt me, for I brought thee up out of the land of* Egypt, *and redeemed thee out of the houſe of ſervants, and I ſent before thee* Moſes, Aaron, *and* Miriam. *O my people, remember now what* Balak *King of* Moab *conſulted, and what* Balaam *the ſon of* Beor *anſwered him from* Shittim *unto* Gilgal, *that ye may know the righteouſneſs of the Lord. q. d.* If I have failed in a *Punctilio* of my promiſe, ſhew it; did not *Balak* and *Balaam* court me, and try all ways to win me over to them by multitudes of Sacrifices, yet I did not deſert you. So *Jer.* 2. 31. *O generation, ſee ye the word of the Lord; have I been a wilderneſs unto* Iſrael, *a land of darkneſs?*

darkneſs? wherefore ſay my people, we are lords, we will come no more unto thee? Iſa. 44. 8.

5. *Evidence.*

The Faithfulneſs of God is abundantly cleared by the conſtant teſtimonies given unto it in all Ages by them that have tryed it, they have all witneſſed for God, and atteſted his unſpotted faithfulneſs to the generations that were to come. So did *Joſhua* 23. 14. *All is come to paſs*; and ſo did *Daniel*, *Chap.* 9. 4. *O Lord the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him*: With which *David's* teſtimony concurs, *Pſal.* 146. 6. *Happy is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his help, whoſe hope is in the Lord his God, which made the heaven and earth, the ſea and all that therein is, which keepeth truth for ever.* Thus his people have been witneſſes in all generations, unto the faithfulneſs of God in his promiſes; the conſideration whereof leaves no doubt or objection behind it.

Sect. II.

And if we enquire into the grounds and reaſons why God is, and ever muſt be moſt Faithful in performing his Promiſes, we ſhall find it is built upon ſtable and unſhaken pillars: *viz.*

1. The Holineſs of his Nature.
2. The All-ſufficiency of his Power.
3. The Honour of his Name.
4. The Unchangeableneſs of his Nature.

1. The

1. The Faithfulneſs of God is built upon the perfect Holineſs of his Nature, by reaſon whereof it is impoſſible for God to lie, *Tit.* 1, 2. *Heb.* 6. 18. The deceitfulneſs of men flows from the corruption of the Humane Nature, but *God is not as man that he ſhould lye, neither as the ſon of man that he ſhould repent; : hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? Or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* *Numb.* 23. 19. If there be no defect in his Being, there can be none in his working; if his Nature be pure Holineſs, all his ways muſt be perfect Faithfulneſs.

2. It is built upon the All-ſufficiency of his Power, whatſoever he hath promiſed to his people, he is able to perform it; men ſometimes falſifie their promiſes through the defects of ability to perform them; but God never out-promiſed himſelf; if he will work none can lett, *Iſa.* 43. 13. He can do whatſoever he pleaſeth to do, *Pſal.* 135. 6. The Holineſs of his Nature engageth, and the Almightineſs of his Power enables him to be Faithful.

3. The glory and Honour of his Name may aſſure us of his Faithfulneſs in making good the Promiſes, and all that good which is in the promiſes to a tittle; for wherever you find a Promiſe of God, you alſo find the Name and Honour of God given as ſecurity for the performance of it; and ſo his name hath ever been pleaded with him by his people, as a mighty argument to work for them, *Joſhuah* 7. 9. *What wilt thou do to thy great name?* *q. d.* Lord thine Honour is a thouſand times more than our lives, it is no ſuch great matter what becomes of us; but ah Lord it is of infinite concernment that the glory of thy Name be ſecured, and thy faithfulneſs kept pure and unſpotted in the world. So again, *Exod.* 32. 11, 12. *And* Moſes

Moses *besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought out of the land of* Egypt, *with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the* Egyptians *speak and say, for mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people, q.d.* It will be sad enough for the hands of the *Egyptians* to fall upon thy people, but infinitely worse for the tongues of the *Egyptians* to fall upon thy Name.

4. The unchangeableness of his Nature gives us the fullest assurance of his Faithfulness in the Promises, *Mal.* 3.6. *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of* Jacob *are not consumed.* Gods unchangeableness is his peoples indempnity, and best security in the midst of dangers; whilst there is not yea and nay with God, there should be no ups and downs, offs and ons in our faith; that which gives steadiness to the Promises, should give steadiness also to our expectations for the performance of them; and so much briefly of the Faithfulness of God absolutely considered in the Nature and grounds of it.

2. Next let us view the Faithfulness of God, as it relates to the many great and precious Promises made unto his people for their security both in their,

1. Temporal
2. Spiritual } Concernments.

1. We find the Faithfulness of God pawned and pledged for the security of his people in their Spiritual and eternal concernments, against all their dangers and

and fears, threatning them on that account, and that more especially in these three respects.

1. It is given them as their great and best security for the Pardon of their sins, 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Our greatest danger comes from sin; Guilt is a fountain of Fears, a pardoned Soul only can look other troubles in the face boldly: As Guilt breeds fear, so Pardon breeds Courage, and Gods Faithfulness in the Covenant is as it were that Pardon-office from whence we fetch our discharges and acquittances, *Isa.* 43. 25. *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake.* The promises of remission are made for Christs sake, and when made, they must be fulfilled for his own, that is his Faithfulness sake.

2. It is engaged for the perseverance of the Saints, and their continuance in the ways of God in the most hazardous and difficult times; this was the encouragement given them, 1 *Cor.* 1. 8, 9. *Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* Ah Lord! might those *Corinthians* say, the Powers of the World are against us, Suffering and Death before us, a Treacherous and fearful heart within us. Ay, but yet fear not, Christ shall confirm you, whosoever opposes you; though the World and your own hearts be deceitful, yet comfort your selves with this, your God is Faithful.

3. The Faithfulness of God is given by promise for his Peoples security in, and encouragement against all their sufferings and afflictions in this World, 2 *Thes.* 3, 2, 3. *That we may be delivered from unreasonable*

reasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith; but the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. He prays they may be delivered from absurd, treacherous and unfaithful men, who would trapan and betray them to ruine; but this is proposed as their relief, that when the treachery of men shall bring them into trouble, the Faithfulness of God shall support them under, and deliver them out of those troubles; they shall have Spiritual supports from God, under their deepest sufferings from men, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19.

2. Gods Faithfulness is engaged for his peoples indempnity and security amidst the Temporal and outward evils whereunto they are liable in this world, and that either to preserve them from troubles, *Psal.* 91. 1, 2, 3, 4. or to open a seasonable door of deliverance out of trouble, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. In both or either of which the hearts of Christians may be at rest in this troublesome world; for what need those troubles fright us, which either shall never touch us, or if they do, shall never hurt, much less ruine us.

Sect. III.

HAving taken a short view of Gods Faithfulness in the Promises, it will be a lovely sight to take one view of it more as it is actuated, and exerted in his Providences over his people; believe it Christians, the Faithfulness of God runs through all his works of providence, whenever he goes forth to work in the World, *Faithfulness is the girdle of his loins,* Isa. 11. 5. It is an allusion to workmen who going forth in the morning to their labour, gird their loins or reins with a girdle, now there is no work wrought by God in

in this world, but his faithfulness is as the Girdle of his Loins. The consideration whereof should make the most despondent believer, *gird up the Loins of his mind*, that is, encourage and strengthen his drooping and discouraged heart. Those works of God which are wrought in Faithfulness and in pursuit of his eternal purposes and gracious promises, should rather delight, than affright us, in beholding of them. It pluckt out the Sting of *David*'s affliction when he considered it was in very faithfulness, that God had afflicted him, *Psal.* 119. 89, 90. But more particularly, let us behold with delight the faithfulness of God, making good six sorts of Promises to his People, in the days of their affliction and trouble, *viz.*

1. The Promises of Preservation.
2. The Promises of Support.
3. The Promises of Direction.
4. The Promises of Provision.
5. The Promises of Deliverance.
6. The Promises of Ordering and Directing the Event to their Advantage.

1. There are promises in the word for your preservation from ruine, and what you read in those promises you dayly see the same fulfilled in your own experiences. You have a promise in *Psal.* 57. 3. *He shall send from Heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up.* Selah. *God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.* Say now, have you not found it so, when Hell hath sent forth its Temptations to devile you? The World its persecutions to destroy your own heart, its unbelieving fears to distract and sink you, hath

not your God sent forth also his mercy and his truth to save you? Hath not his truth been your shield and buckler? *Psal.* 91. 4. May you not say with the Church it is of his mercy you are not consumed, his mercies are new every morning, and great is his faithfulness, *Lam.* 3. 23.

2. As you have seen it actually fulfilling the promises for your preservation, so you may see it making good all the promises in his word for your support in troubles. That is a sweet promise, *Psal.* 91. 15. *I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him*, you have also a very supporting promise in *Isa.* 41. 10. *Fear not thou, for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* O, how evidently hath the faithfulness of God shone forth in the performance of his word to you in this respect! you are his witnesses, you would have sunk in the deep waters of trouble if it had not been so. So speaks *David, Psal.* 73. 26. *My heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart; and my portion for ever.* Have you not found it so with you as it is in 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.* God's strength hath been made perfect in your weakness, by this you have been carried through all your troubles; hitherto hath he helped you.

3. As you have seen it faithfully fulfilling the promises for your preservation, and support; So you have seen it in the direction of your ways. So runs that promise, *Psal.* 32. 8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide*

guide thee with mine eye. Certain it is *That the way of man is not in himself*, Jer. 10. 23. O how faithfully hath your God guided you, and stood by you in all the difficult cases of your Life! Is not that promise, *Heb.* 13. 5. faithfully fulfilled to a tittle, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee?* Surely you can set your seal to that in *Joh.* 17. 17. *Thy word is truth*: had you been left to your own counsels you had certainly perished; as it is said of them, in *Psal.* 81. 12. *I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts: and they walked in their own counsels.*

4. As there are promises in the word for your preservation, support, and direction; So in the fourth place there are promises for your *provisions*, as in *Psal.* 34. 9. the Lord hath promised that *They that fear him shall not want.* When they are driven to extremity, he will provide, *Isa.* 41. 17. *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of* Israel *will not forsake them.* And is not this faithfully performed? *He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his Covenant*, Psal. 111. 5. In all the exigencies of your lives, you have found him faithful to this day; you are his witnesses that his providences never failed you, his care hath been renewed every morning for you; how great is his faithfulness?

5. You also find in the word some reviving promises for your deliverances. You have a very sweet promise in *Psal.* 91. 14. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him*: and again, *Psal.* 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee*; you have done so, and he hath made a way to escape. Our lives are so many monuments of mercy, we have lived among Lyons,

yet preserved, *Psal.* 57. 4. The burning Bush was an embleme of the Church miraculously preserved.

6. There are promises in the word for the ordering and directing all the occurrences of providence to your great advantages; so it is promised, *Rom.* 8. 28. *That all things shall work together for good, to them that love God.* Fear not Christians, however you find it now, whilst you are tossing to and fro upon the unstable waves of this world; you shall find to be sure when you come to heaven, that all the troubles of your lives were guided as steddily by this promise, as ever any Ship at Sea was directed to its Port, by the Compass or North-Star.

And now what remains, but that I press you as before,

1. To enter into this Chamber of Divine Faithfulness.

2. To shut the Door behind you.

3. And then to live comfortably on it in evil days.

1. Enter into this Chamber of God's faithfulness by faith, and hide your selves there. Every man is a Lye, but God is True, eternally and inchangeably faithful; O exercise your faith upon it, be at rest in it!

Now there are two great and weighty Arguments to press you to enter into this Chamber of divine faithfulness.

1. *Arg.* Is fetched from the nature of God who cannot lye, *Titus* 1. 2. *He is not as man, that he should lye.* Numb. 23, 19. *Neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make*

it

it good? Remember upon what everlasting steddy grounds the faithfulness of God is built. These are immutable things, *Heb.* 6. 18. This *Abraham* built upon. *Rom.* 4. 21. *Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* He accounted him faithful that promised. What would you expect or require in the person that you are to trust? You would,

1. Expect a clear promise, and lo, you have a thousand all the Scripture over; fitted to all the cases of your Souls and Bodies. This you may plead with God, as *David*, Psal. 119. 49. *Remember the word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* So *Jacob* pleaded, *Gen.* 32. 12. *Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.* These are Gods Bonds and Obligations.

2. You would expect sufficient power to make good what he promiseth. This is in God as a fair foundation of faith, *Isa.* 26. 4. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength*; Because of thy strength we will wait on thee. Creatures cannot, but God can do what he will.

3. You would expect infinite goodness and mercy inclining him to help and save you; why? So it is here, *Psal.* 130. 7. *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with him is plenteous redemption.* So *Moses*, Exod. 33. 18. *I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.* The request was a view of God's Glory. The answer is, my goodness shall pass before thee, which hints to us, that though all God's Attributes be glorious, yet that, he most glories in, is his goodness: And then,

4. You would expect that none of his Promises

were ever blotted or stained by his unfaithfulness at any time, and so it is here, *Josh.* 23. 14. *not one thing hath failed*, all are come to pass, all ages have sealed this conclusion, *Thy word is truth, thy word is truth.*

2. *Arg.* Besides all this you have the encouragement of all former experiences both others and your own, as a second Argument to press you to enter into this Chamber of Safety, the Faithfulness of God.

1. You have the experiences of others. Saints have reckoned the experiences of others that lived a thousand years before them, as excellent arguments to quicken their Faith. So *Hos.* 12. 4. He had power over the Angel and prevailed, he found him in *Bethel* and there he spake, Remember there was a *Joseph* with us in Prison, a *Jeremy* in the Dungeon, a *Daniel* in the Den, a *Peter* in Chains, an *Hezekiah* upon the brink of the Grave; and they all found the help of God most faithfully protecting them and saving them in all their troubles. Suitable to this is that in *Psal.* 22. 4. 5. *Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted and thou deliveredst them, they cried unto thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not confounded.*

2. Your own experiences may encourage your faith: So *Davids* did, 1. *Sam.* 17. 37. *The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon, and out of the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* So did *Paul's* experience encourage his Faith, in 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. *Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.* Thus enter into the Faithfulness of God by Faith.

2. Let me beg you to be sure to shut the doors behind you, against all unbelieving doubts, jealousies, and suspicions of the faithfulness of God; the best men

men may find temptations of that nature; so did good *Asaph* though an eminent Saint, *Psal.* 77. 7, 8. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for ever more?* These jealousies are apt to creep in upon the minds of men, especially when,

1. God delays to answer our Prayers as soon as we expect the return of them, we are all in hast for a speedy answer, forgetting that seasons of Prayer are our seed-times; and when we have sown that precious seed, we must wait for the Harvest, as the Husbandman doth. Even a precious *Heman* may find a faint qualm of unbelief and despondency seizing him by the long suspension of Gods answers, *Psal.* 88. 9, 10, 11.

2. Twill be hard to shut the door upon unbelief, when all things in the eye of our sense and reason seem to work against the Promise. It will require an *Abraham's* Faith at such a time to glorifie God by believing in hope against hope, *Rom.* 4. 18. If ever thou hopest to enjoy the sweet repose and rest of a Christian in evil times, thou must resolve whatever thine eyes do see, or thy senses report, to hold fast this as a most sure conclusion; God is faithful, and his word is sure, and that although *Clouds and darkness be round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne*, *Psal.* 97. 2.

O that you would once learn to keep house upon Gods Faithfulness, and fetch your daily reliefs and supports thence, whensoever you are pressed and assaulted, either,

1. By Spiritual troubles. When you walk in darkness and have no light, then you are to live by acts of trust and recumbency upon the most faithful one, *Isa.* 50. 10. Or,

2. By

2. By Temporal diſtreſſes, ſo did the People of God of old, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. He lived by Faith on this Attribute when all viſible comforts and ſupplies were out of ſight.

But eſpecially let me warn and caution you againſt five principal enemies to your repoſe upon the Faithfulneſs of God, *viz.*

1. Diſtracting cares, which divide the mind, and eat out the peace and comfort of the heart, and which is worſt of all, they reflect very diſhonourably upon God, who hath pledged his Faithfulneſs and Truth for our ſecurity; againſt which I pray you bar the door by thoſe two Scriptures, *Phil.* 4.6. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known unto God.* And that in 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.*

2. Bar the door againſt unchriſtian deſpondency, another enemy to the ſweet repoſe of your Souls in this comfortable and quiet Chamber of Divine Faithfulneſs; you will find this unbecoming and uncomfortable diſtemper of mind, inſinuating and creeping in upon you, except you believe and reaſon it out, as *David* did, *Pſal.* 42. 11. *Why art thou caſt down O my ſoul, and why diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God for I ſhall yet praiſe him.*

3. Bar the door of your heart againſt carnal policies and ſinful ſhifts, which war againſt your own Faith, and Gods Faithfulneſs, as much as any other enemy whatſoever. This was the fault of good *David* in a day of trouble, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. *And* David *ſaid in his heart, I ſhall now periſh one day by the hand of* Saul; *there is nothing better for me than that I ſhould ſpeedily eſcape into the land of the* Philiſtines. Alas poor *David*, nothing better than this? Time was when thou couldſt

couldst think on a better way, when thou couldst say *at what time I am afraid I will trust in thee.* How dost thou forget thy self in this strait? Doth thy old refuge in God fail thee now? Can the *Philistines* secure thee better than the *Promises*? Wilt thou fly from thy best friend, to thy worst enemies? But what need we wonder at *David* who find the same distemper almost unavoidable to our selves in like cases?

4. Shut the door against discontents at, and murmurings against the dispositions of Providence, whatever you feel or fear; I perswade you not to a *Stoical Apathy*, and senseleſsness of the evils of the times, that would preclude the exercise of Patience: If the Martyrs had all had the dead Palsie before they came to the fire, their Faith and Patience had not triumphed so gloriously as they did; but on the contrary, beware of grudgings against the ways and will of God, than which nothing militates more against your Faith and the peace and quietness of your hearts.

5. To conclude, shut the door against all suspicions and jealousies of the firmness and stability of the Promises, when you find all sensible comforts shaking and trembling under your feet; have a care of such dangerous questions as that, *Psal.* 77. 8. *Doth his promise fail?* These are the things which undermine the foundation both of your faith and comfort.

3. In a word, Having sheltered your Souls in this Chamber of rest, and thus shut the doors behind you; all that you have to do, is to take your rest in God, and enjoy the pleasure of a resigned Soul into the hands of a Faithful Creator, by opposing the Faithfulness of God, to all the fickleness and unfaithfulness you will daily find in men, *Mica.* 7. 6, 7, Yea to the weakness and fading of your own natural strength and ability, *Psal.* 73. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth,*

faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. And so much of the *Third Chamber* prepared for Believers in the Name of their God.

CHAP. IX.

Opening to Believers the Unchangeableness of God, as a Fourth Chamber of Refuge and Rest in times of trouble.

SECT. I.

IT is said, *Prov.* 9. 1. *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewen out her seven pillars.* (*i.e.*) She hath raised her whole building upon solid and stable foundations, for indeed the strength of every building is according to the ground work upon which it is erected, *Debile fundamentum fallit opus.* The Wisdom and Love of God have built an house for a Refuge and Sanctuary to Believers in tempestuous and evil times, containing many pleasant and comfortable Chambers prepared for their lodgings, till the calamities be over-past; three of them have been already opened, *viz.* The Power, Wisdom, and Faithfulness of God.

The last of which leads into a fourth much like unto it, namely the *Unchangeableness* of God; wherein his people may find as much rest and comfort amidst the vicissitudes of this unstable World, as in any of the former. This World is compared, *Rev.* 15. 2. to *A sea of glass mingled with fire.* A Sea for its

its turbulency and inſtability, a Sea of glaſs for the brittleneſs and frailty of every thing in it; and a Sea of glaſs mingled with fire, to repreſent the ſharp ſufferings and fiery trials, with which the Saints are exerciſed here below. The only ſupport and comfort we have againſt the fickleneſs and inſtability of the Creature, is the Unchangeableneſs of God. There is a two-fold changeableneſs in the Creature:

1. Natural, the effect of Sin.
2. Sinful, in its own Nature.

1. Natural, let in by the fall upon all the Creation; by reaſon whereof the ſweeteſt Creature is but a fading flower, *Pſal.* 102. 26. Time like a Moth frets out the beſt wrought garment with which we cloath and deck our ſelves in this World, *temporalia rapit tempus.* Our moſt pleaſant enjoyments, Wives, Children, Eſtates, like the Gourd in which *Jonas* ſo delighted himſelf, may wither in a night; Sin rings theſe changes all the world over.

2. Sinful, from the falſeneſs, inconſtancy, deceitfulneſs of the Creature; *Solomon* puts a hard queſtion which may poſe the whole World to anſwer it, *Prov.* 20. 6. *A faithful man who can find?* The meaning is a man of perfect and univerſal Faithfulneſs, is a *Phœnix* ſeldom or never to be found in this world; for when a queſtion in Scripture is moved and let fall again without any anſwer, then the ſence is Negative; but though the believer deſpair of finding an unchangeable man, it is his happineſs and comfort to find an Unchangeable God.

The Unchangeableneſs of God will appear three ways.

1. By

1. By Scripture Emblems.
2. By Scripture Assertions.
3. By convincing Arguments.

1. By Scripture *Emblems*, remarkable to this purpose is that place, *Jam.* 1. 17. where God is called *The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* No variableness the word is, παραλλαγὴ, an Astronomical term, commonly applyed to the Heavenly Bodies which have their *Parallaxes*, *i.e.* their Declinations, Revolutions, Vicissitudes, Eclipses, Increases and Decreases; but God is a Sun that never rises nor sets, but is everlastingly and unchangeably one and the same; with him is no variableness nor shadow of turning, τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα. The Sun in its *Zenith* casts no shadow; it is the *Tropick*, or turning of its course, that causes the shadow; the very *substance* of turning is with man; but not the least *shadow* of turning with God. And in *Deut.* 32. 4. *Moses* tells us, *God is a rock, and his work is perfect.* And indeed perfect working necessarily follows a perfect Being: Now there is nothing found in Nature more solid, fixed, and immutable, than a rock; the firmest buildings will decay, a few ages will make them a ruinous heap; but though one age pass away and another comes, the rocks abide where, and what they were; *Our God is the rock of ages*; and yet one step higher, in *Zech.* 6. 1. His decrees and purposes are called Mountains of Brass, that is, most firm, durable, and unchangeable purposes: Thus the Immutability of God is shadowed forth to us in Scripture Emblems.

2. The

2. The ſame alſo you will find in plain poſitive Scripture Aſſertions; ſuch are theſe that follow, *Mal.* 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye ſons of* Jacob *are not conſumed.* And *Job* 23. 13. *He is in one mind, and who can turn him?* Men are in one mind to day, and another to morrow; the winds are not more variable than the minds of men: But God is in one mind, the purpoſes of his heart never change. *Thou art the ſame,* or as ſome tranſlate, *Thou art thy ſelf for ever, Pſal.* 102. 27. Thus when *Moſes* deſired to know his name that he might tell *Pharaoh* from whom he came; the Anſwer is, *I am hath ſent me, Exod.* 3. 14. not I was, or I will be, but *I am that I am,* , noting the Abſolute unchangeableneſs of his Nature.

3. The Unchangeableneſs of God is fully proved by convincing arguments which Divines commonly draw from ſuch *Topicks* as theſe, *viz.*

1. The Perfection of his Goodneſs.
2. The Purity of his Nature.
3. The Glory of his Name.

1. *Arg.* From the Perfection of his Goodneſs and Bleſſedneſs, God is *Optimus, maximus,* the beſt and chiefeſt good, and in that ſenſe, *There is none good but one, which is God, Mark* 10. 18. From whence it is thus argued, If there be any change in God, that change muſt either be for the better, or for the worſe, or into a State equal with that he poſſeſſed before.

But not for the better, for then he could not be the chief good; nor for the worſe, for then he muſt ceaſe to be God, the perfection of whoſe Nature is perfectly excluſive of all defects; nor into an equal ſtate

of

of goodness with that he possessed before; that notion would involve *Polytheism*, and suppose two First and equal Beings, besides the vanity of such a change would be absolutely repugnant to the Wisdom of God.

Therefore with the Father of lights can be no variableness nor shadow of turning.

2. *Arg.* The Unchangeableness of God may be evinced from the Purity, sincerity, and uncompoundedness of his Being, in which there neither is, nor can be the least mixture, he being a pure act. From whence it is thus argued;

If there be any change in God, that change must be made either by something without himself; or by something within himself, or by both together.

But it cannot be by any thing without himself; for in him all created dependent Beings live and move, and enjoy the Beings they have; and all the changes that are among them, are from the pleasure of this unchangeable Being, he changeth them, but it is not possible for him, upon whose pleasure they so intirely and absolutely depend, both as to their Beings, and workings, to suffer any change himself from, or by them.

Nor can any such change be made upon God by any thing within himself; for that would suppose action and passion, *movens & motum* a mixture and composition in his Nature, which is absolutely rejected and excluded by the simplicity and purity thereof: seeing therefore it can neither be from any power without him, nor any mixture within him, there can be no change at all made on him.

3. *Arg.* That is by no means to be ascribed to God, which at once eclipses the glory of his name, and

and overthrows the hopes and comforts of all his people.

But ſo would the ſuppoſition of mutability in God do, this would level him with the vain changeable creature; whereas it is a principal part of his glory, that *He is not as man that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man that he ſhould repent*, *Numb.* 23. 19. This alſo would overthrow the hopes and comforts of all his people, which are built upon this Attribute as upon their ſtable and ſolid foundation: Among divers other we find three principal priviledges of the people of God, built upon his Immutability, *viz.*

1. Their Perſeverance in Grace.
2. Their Comfort in the Promiſes.
3. Their Hopes of Eternal life.

1. Their Perſeverance in Grace is built upon the foundation of Gods unchangeableneſs; one main reaſon why Chriſtians never repent of their choice of Chriſt and the ways of Godlineſs, is becauſe the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, *Rom.* 11.29. Should God but once repent of the gifts of grace he hath beſtowed on us, and alter in his love towards us, how ſoon would our love to God, and delight in God vaniſh, as the image in the glaſs doth when the man that looked upon it hath once turned away his face?

2. All their comfort in the promiſes is built upon Gods unchangeableneſs. The promiſes are the ſprings of conſolation; ſhould they fail and dry up, the whole world could not afford them one drop of Spiritual comfort to refreſh their thirſty Souls; the ſtrength of our conſolation immediately reſults from

the ſtability and firmneſs of the Scripture promiſes, *Heb.* 6. 18.

3. Their hopes of eternal life depends upon the unchangeableneſs of God that hath promiſed, *Tit.* 1. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began.* Take away then the Immutability of God, and you at once darken and eclipſe his Glory, and overturn the perſeverance, conſolations, and hopes of all his people; but bleſſed be God theſe things are built upon firm foundations.

1. His Nature is unchangeable, *Thou art the ſame for ever, Pſ.* 102. 27. The Heavens though they be the pureſt, and therefore the moſt durable and unchangeable part of the creation; yet they ſhall periſh and wax old, and be changed as a veſture, but our God is the ſame for ever.

2. His power is unchangeable, *Iſa.* 59. 1. *The Lords hand is not ſhortened.* Time will enfeeble the ſtrongeſt creature, and cut ſhort the Power of the hands of the mighty, they cannot do in their decrepit age as they were wont to do in their youthful and vigorous age; but the Lords hand never is, nor can be ſhortened.

3. The counſels and purpoſes of his heart are unchangeable, *Pſal.* 33. 11. *The counſel of the Lord ſtandeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*

4. The goodneſs, truth, and mercy of God are Unchangeable, *Pſal.* 100. 5. *The Lord is good, his mercy is everlaſting, and his truth endureth to all generations.*

5. The word of God is Unchangeable. Though all fleſh be as graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the field, yet the word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever; all the Promiſes contained therein are ſure and

and ſtedfaſt: Not yea and nay, but yea and Amen for ever, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20.

6. The love of God is an Unchangeable love, *Jer.* 31. 3. *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love.*

7. In a word, all the gracious Pardons of God are unchangeable, as they are full without exceptions, ſo they are final Pardons without any revocation. *I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their iniquities and ſins will I remember no more, Heb.* 8. 12. And thus much briefly of Gods unchangeableneſs abſolutely conſidered in it ſelf.

SECT. II.

LEt us next conſider, and believingly view the Unchangeableneſs of God in its reſpect and relation,

1. To his Promiſes.
2. To his Providences.

1. The Immutability of God gives down its comforts to Believers through the Promiſes, there is no other way by which they can have a comfortable admiſſion into this Chamber or Attribute of God; and there are ſix ſorts of promiſes in the word, by which it is highly improveable to their ſupport and comfort in an evil day. For,

1. The unchangeable God hath engaged himſelf by Promiſe to be with his people in all times and in all ſtreights, *Heb.* 13. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* The life, joy, and comfort of a Believer lies in the boſom of that Promiſe, the concluſion

ſion of Faith from thence is ſweet and ſure; If I ſhall never be forſaken of my God, let Hell and Earth do their worſt, I can never be miſerable.

2. The Unchangeable God hath promiſed to maintain their graces, and thereby his intereſt in them for ever, *Jer.* 32. 40. *And I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.* Where the Lord undertakes for both parts in the Covenant, his own and theirs; I will not turn away from them, O unexpreſſible mercy! Yea, but Lord, may the poor Believer ſay, that is not ſo much my fear, as that my treacherous heart will turn away from thee. No, ſaith God, I will take care for that alſo; I will put my fear into thy heart, and thou ſhalt never depart from me.

3. The Unchangeable God hath promiſed to eſtabliſh the Covenant with them for ever; ſo that thoſe who are once taken into that gracious Covenant ſhall never be turned out of it again, *Iſa.* 54. 10. *The mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.*

4. The Unchangeable God hath ſecured his loving kindneſs to his people by Promiſe under all the trials, and ſmarting rods of affliction, with which he chaſtens them in this world; he hath reſerved to himſelf the liberty of afflicting them, but bound himſelf by promiſe never to remove his favour from them, *Pſal.* 89. 33, 34. *I will viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes, nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs will I not take from them, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail.*

5. The

5. The Promiſes of a joyful reſurrection from the dead are grounded upon the Immutability of God, *Matth.* 22. 32. *I am the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob; *God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.* Death hath made a great change upon them, but none upon their God; though they be not, he is ſtill the ſame, therefore they are not loſt in death; but ſhall aſſuredly be found again in the reſurrection.

6. To conclude, the promiſes of the Saints eternal happineſs with God in Heaven, are founded in his Immutability, 1 *Cor.* 1. 8, 9. *Tit.* 1. 2. By all which you ſee what a pleaſant lodging is prepared for the Saints in the unchangeable promiſes of God, amidſt all the changes and alterations here below.

2. Once more, let us view the unchangeableneſs of God in his Providences towards his people, whatever changes it makes upon us, or whatever changes we ſeem to diſcern in it, nothing is more certain than this, that it holds one and the ſame tenor, purſues one and the ſame deſign in all that it doth upon us, or about us. Providences indeed are very variable, but the deſigns and ends of God in them all are invariable, and the ſame for ever. It is noted in *Ezek.* 1. 12. that *The wheels went ſtraight forward, whither the ſpirit was to go, they went, and they turned not when they went.* As it is in Nature ſo in Providence, you have one day fair, halcyon, and bright, another dark and full of ſtorm, one ſeaſon hot, another cold; but all theſe ſerve to one and the ſame end and deſign to make the earth fruitful; and the aim of all Providences is to make you holy and happy: That is a ſweet Promiſe, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* This is the compaſs by which all Providences ſteer

their course, as a Ship at Sea, doth by the *Card*; but more particularly, let us note the unchangeableness of God in his Providences of all kinds, *effective* and *permissive*, and see in them all his unchangeable righteousness and goodness.

1. It must needs be so, considering the unchangeableness of his decree, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure.* Providences serve, but never frustrate, execute but cannot make void the decree; so that you may say of the most afflicting Providences, as *David* doth of the stormy winds, *Psal.* 148. 8. they all fulfil his word.

2. The Wisdom of God proves it, he will not suffer his works or permissions to clash with his designs and purposes; Divine Wisdom shews it self in the steddy direction of all things to the ultimate end. To open this in some particulars, consider,

1. Doth the Lord permit wicked men to rage, and insult, persecute, and vex his people? Yet all this while Providence is in its right way, it walks in as direct a line to your good, as when it is in a more pleasant path of Peace. *Jer.* 24. 5. *Thus saith the Lord the God of* Israel, *like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of* Judah, *whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the* Chaldeans *for their good. Israel* was sent to *Babylon* for their good. This improves your faith and patience, *Rev.* 13. 10. Here is the patience and faith of the Saints. So *Rom.* 5. 2, 3. *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoyce in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience.* By this you are weaned from, and mortified to this world.

2. Doth

2. Doth the Lord in his Providence order many and frequent, close and smarting afflictions for you? Why lo, here is the same design managing as effectually, as if all the peace and prosperity in the World were ordered for you: The face of Providence indeed is not the same, but the love of God is still the the same, he loves you as much when he smites, as when he smiles on you; for what are his ends in afflicting you, and what the sanctified fruits of your afflictions? Is it not?

1. To purge your iniquities, *Isa.* 27. 9. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.*

2. To reduce your hearts to God, *Psal.* 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*

3. To quicken you to your duties, let the best man be without afflictions and he will quickly grow dull in the way of his duty.

3. Doth God let loose the chain of Satan to tempt and buffet you? Yet is he still the same God to you as before; for do but observe his ends in that permission, and you will find, that by these things the Lord is leading you towards that desired assurance of his love which your Souls long after. Few Christians attain to any considerable settlement of Soul, but by such shakings and combates; the end of these permissions is to put you to your knees, and blow up a greater flame and fervour of Spirit in Prayer, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. So that eventually these permissions of Providence prove singular advantages, and blessings to you.

Sect. III.

WHat remains then, ſeeing God is Unchangeable in his love to his People, purſuing the the great ends of all his gracious promiſes in a ſteddy courſe of Providence wherein he will never effect, or permit any thing that is really repugnant to his own glory or their good; but that we enter alſo into this Camber of Reſt, ſhut the doors about us, and comfortably improve the unchangeableneſs of God, while we ſee nothing but changes and troubles here below.

1. Enter into Gods Unchangeableneſs by Faith, take up your lodgings in this ſweet Attribute alſo; and to encourage your Faith thereunto, ſeriouſly conſider a few particulars.

1. Conſider how conſtant, firm, and unchangeable God hath been to his people in all times and ſtreights; not one among the many thouſands of his people that are paſſed on before you, but by frequent and certain experience have found him ſo. What a ſingular encouragement ſhould this be to our Faith in the caſe before us? *Pſal.* 9. 10. *They that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee, for thou Lord haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee.* So *Iſa.* 25. 4. *Thou haſt been a ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, a refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhaddow from the heat, when the blaſt of the terrible ones is as the ſtorm againſt the wall.* Neither is there any thing in your experience contradictory to the encouraging reports others have made of God; you muſt acknowledge, that notwithſtanding your own changeableneſs who have hardly been able to maintain your

your hearts in any Spiritual frame towards God for one day together, yet his mercies towards you have been new every morning, and great hath been his Faithfulneſs: You have often turned aſide from the way of your duty, and have not followed God in a ſteddy courſe of obedience, and yet for all that, his goodneſs and mercy have followed you all the days of your life, as it is *Pſal.* 23. 6.

2. Conſider how often you have doubted and miſtruſted the unchangeableneſs of God, and been forced with ſhame and ſorrow to retract your folly therein; God hath many times convinced you that his love to you is an unchangeable love, how many changes ſoever in the courſe of his Providence have paſſed over you; conſult *Iſa.* 49. 14. and *Pſal.* 77, 78. and ſee how the caſes parallel both in reſpect of Gods conſtancy to them and you, and the inconſtancy of his peoples Faith then, and yours now; your fears and doubts are the ſame with theirs; though his goodneſs and love have been as unchangeable to you as ever it was towards them.

3. Conſider the Advocateſhip and interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt in Heaven for you; by vertue whereof the favour and love of God becomes unalterable towards his people. If any thing can be ſuppoſed to cool or quench the love of God towards you, nothing in the world is more like to do it, than your ſin, and this indeed is that, which you fear will eſtrange and alienate the heart of your God from you. But Reader, if thou be one that ſincerely mourneſt for all the grief and diſhonour of God by thy ſin, applieſt the bloud of ſprinkling to thy Soul by Faith, and makeſt mortification and watchfulneſs thy daily buſineſs; comfort thy ſelf againſt that fear from that ſingular encouragement given thee

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in this caſe, 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. *My little children, theſe things write I unto you that ye ſin not, and if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our ſins.* Look as the death of Chriſt healed the great breach betwixt God and thy Soul, by thy reconciliation at firſt; ſo the powerful Interceſſion of Chriſt in Heaven effectually prevents all new breaches betwixt God and thy Soul afterwards, ſo that he will never totally and finally caſt thee off again.

2. Shut the door behind you againſt all objections, ſcruples, and queſtionings of Gods immutability, and by a reſolved and ſteddy Faith, maintain the the honour of God in this point by thy conſtant adherence to it and dependence upon it, and eſpecially ſee that thou give him the glory of his unchangeableneſs.

1. When thou ſhalt ſee the greateſt alterations and changes made by his Providence in the World. What though thou ſhouldeſt live to ſee all things turned upſide down, the foundations out of courſe, all things drawing into a Sea of confuſion and trouble? Yet in the midſt of thoſe publick diſtractions and diſtreſs of Nations: Encourage thou thy ſelf in this, thy God and his love to his people is the ſame for ever. *Pſal.* 46. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midſt of the ſea. God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved.*

2. Live by Faith upon Gods unchangeableneſs under the greateſt changes of your own condition in this world: Providence may make great alterations upon all your outward comforts, it may caſt you down,

down, how dear ſoever you be to God, from riches into poverty, from health into ſickneſs, from honour into reproach, from liberty into bondage! thou mayeſt overlive thy comfortable relations, and of a *Naomi* become a *Marah*. *Thou haſt lifted me up, and caſt me down*, ſaid as good a man as you, *Pſal.* 102. 10. Yet ſtill it is your duty, and will be your great priviledge in the midſt of all theſe changes, to act your faith upon the never changing God, as that holy man did, *Hab.* 3. 17. *Although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat; the flocks ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls; yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation. q. d.* Suppoſe a thouſand diſappointments of my earthly hopes, yet will I maintain my hope in God. O Chriſtian, with how many yets, notwithſtandings, and nevertheleſſes, muſt thy faith bear up in times of trouble, or thou'l ſink?

3. See thou live upon Gods unchangeableneſs, when age and ſickneſs ſhall inform thee, that thy great change is at hand; though thy heart and thy fleſh fail, comfort thy ſelf with this, thy God will never fail thee, *Pſal.* 73. 16. *O God*, ſaith *David*, *thou haſt taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works, now alſo when I am old and gray headed, forſake me not, Pſal.* 71, 17, 18.

4. Live upon the unchangeableneſs of God under the greateſt and ſaddeſt changes of your Spiritual condition, God may cloud the light of his countenance over thy Soul, he may fill thee with fears and troubles, and the comforter that ſhould relieve thee, may ſeem to be far off; yet ſtill maintain thy faith

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in the unchangeableneſs of his loves; truſt in the name of the Lord, ſtay thy ſelf upon thy God when thou walkeſt in darkneſs and haſt no light, *Iſa.* 50.10. Thus ſhut thy door.

3. Improve the unchangeableſs of God to thy beſt advantage in the worſt times, by drawing thence ſuch comfortable concluſions as theſe:

1. If God be an unchangeable God in his promiſes, and in his love to his people, what ſhould hinder but the people of God may live happily and comfortably in the ſaddeſt times, and greateſt troubles upon earth. *As ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. Certainly nothing ought to quench a Chriſtians mirth that is not able to ſeparate him from the love of Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 35.

2. If God be an unchangeable God in his love to his people; then it becomes all that have ſpecial intereſt in this God, to be unchangeable and immoveable in the ways of their obedience towards him: God will not caſt you off, ſee that you caſt not off your duties, no not when they are ſurrounded with difficulties; he loves you, though you often grieve him by ſin; ſee that you ſtill love him, though he often grieve and burden you by affliction: he will own you for his people under the greateſt contempts and reproaches of the World; ſee that you own and honour his ways and truths when you are under moſt reproach from a vile World.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Opening the Care of God for his people in times of trouble, as the fifth Chamber of Reſt to Believers.

SECT. I.

CAre in the general Notion of it, as it is applyed to the Creature, imports the ſtudiouſneſs, and ſolicitouſneſs of our thoughts, for the ſafety and welfare of our ſelves, or thoſe we love, and highly value. Now though there be no ſuch thing properly in God, at whoſe diſpoſe and pleaſure all events are, and to whoſe counſels and appointments all difficulties muſt give way, yet he is pleaſed to accommodate himſelf to our weakneſs, and expreſs his regard and love to his people, by ſuch things, as one creature doth to another to which it is endeared by relation or affection. To this purpoſe we find many ſignificant, Synonomous expreſſions in Scripture, all importing the careof God over his people in a pleaſant variety of notion and expreſſion, as *Nah.* 1. 7. *The Lord is good, a ſtrong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that truſt in him.* He knoweth them, *i. e.* he hath a ſpecial, tender, and careful eye upon them, to ſee their wants ſupplyed, and to protect them in all their dangers; for in the common and general ſenſe, he knoweth them that truſt not in him, as well as thoſe that do; and further to clear this ſence of the place, it is ſaid, *Pſ.* 40. 17. *The Lord thinketh on them.* Importing not only ſimple cogitation, but the immo-

immoration or abiding of his thoughts upon them, as our thoughts are wont to do, upon that which we highly eſteem, eſpecially when any danger is near it. And yet farther to clear this ſenſe, it is ſaid, *Job* 36. 7. *He withdraweth not his Eye from the righteous.* As when *Moſes* was expoſed in the *Ark* of Bulruſhes, where his Life was in eminent hazards by the *waters of Nilus* upon one ſide, and the *Egyptian Cut-Throats* on the other; his Siſter *Miriam* kept watch at a diſtance, to ſee what would be done to him. Her eye was never off that *Ark* wherein her dear Brother lay; fear and care engaged her eye to keep a true watch for him. Thus the Lord withdraweth not his eye from the righteous. To the ſame purpoſe is that expreſſion, *Deut.* 33. 3. *Yea he loved the People; all his Saints are in thy hand.* That which we dearly love and prize above ordinary, we keep in our own hands for its ſecurity, as not thinking it ſafe enough in any other hand or place. And once more, *Iſa.* 49. 16. God is ſaid to engrave them upon the Palms of his Hands, alluding to what is cuſtomary among men, who when they would charge their memories with ſomething of ſpecial concernment, uſe to change a Ring, or bind a Thred about the Finger, to put them in mind of it. Thus is the care of our God expreſſed to us in Scripture notions. The amount of all which, is given us in that one proper and full expreſſion of the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *He careth for you.* To open this Chamber of *Divine care* as a place of ſweeteſt reſt, to our anxious and perplexed minds, in times of difficulty and hazard, it will be neceſſary that you ſeriouſly ponder;

1. The

1. The Grounds and Reaſons
2. The Extent and Compaſs
3. The Lovely Properties

} Of the care of God.

1. The grounds and reaſons of Gods care for his people; which are,

1. The ſtrict and dear Relations in which he is pleaſed to own them. Believers are his children, and you know how naturally children engage and draw forth the Fathers care for them. This is the argument Chriſt uſes, *Matth.* 6. 31, 32. *Therefore take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? Or what ſhall we drink? Or wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things.* Children, eſpecially when young, diſquiet not themſelves about provions for back or belly, but leave that to the care of their Parents, from whom by the tye and Bonds of Nature and Love, they expect proviſion for all thoſe wants: Every one takes care for his own; much more doth God for his own Children, and indeed he expects his children ſhould live upon his care; as our children in their minority, do upon ours.

2. Gods precious eſtimation and value of them, engages his conſtant care for them. Believers are his Jewels, *Mal.* 3. 17. his peculiar people, 1 *Pet.* 2. 6. his ſpecial portion or treaſure in this world, *Deut.* 32. 9. and as ſuch he prizes and eſteems them above all the people of the earth, and accordingly exerciſeth his ſpecial care in all the dangers they are here expoſed to. Special love engageth peculiar care.

3. The dangers and fears of the people of God, in

in this world, are many and great, and were it not for the Lords aſſiduous and tender care over them, they muſt neceſſarily be ruined, both in ſoul and body, by them. The Church is God's Vineyard, its Enemies as ſo many wild Boars to root it up: Upon this account, he ſaith, *Iſa.* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* And indeed it is well for *Iſrael*, that he that keepeth it, never ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth, *Pſal.* 121. 4. that our houſes are in peace, that we and our dear relations fall not as a prey, into cruel and bloody hands, skilful to deſtroy, that we find any reſt, or comfort in ſo evil and dangerous a world, it is wholly and only to be aſcribed to the care of God over us, and ours.

4. Jeſus Chriſt hath ſolemnly recommended all the people of God, to his particular care. It was one of the laſt expreſſions of Chriſts love to them at the parting hour, *Joh.* 17. 11. *And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world; and I come to thee: Holy Father, keep through thine own name thoſe whom thou haſt given me, q. d.* While I have been perſonally preſent with them, I took the ſame care of them; as a Shepheard doth of his Flock, or a tender Father of his Children: But now I muſt leave them in the world, and in the midſt of a world of dangers, fears and troubles, againſt which they can make no proviſion or defence themſelves. Father remember them, look after them, when I ſhall be removed from them, they are thine, as well as mine; and I recommend them with my laſt breath to thy care and protection. This is a ſpecial ground alſo of Gods care for them.

5. Believers dayly caſt themſelves upon the care of

of God, and reſign themſelves unto it in their dayly Prayers. And by their often renewed acts of Faith, than which no act is found more engaging from the creature upon its God; though there be nothing of merit, yet there is much of engaging efficacy in it, *Iſa.* 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee: becauſe he truſteth in thee.* We find it ſo among our ſelves, the more firmly and entirely any one truſteth to us, and dependeth upon us, the more he engageth us to protect or relieve him. Now this is the dayly work of Chriſtians to truſt God over all, and put all their concernments into his hand, which very truſt and dependance draws forth the care of God for them.

6. In a word, the many promiſes God hath made to his people to preſerve, ſupport and ſupply them in all the times of need, engageth the care of God for them, as often as ſuch wants, or dangers befal them; for indeed herein, he at once takes care for their neceſſity, and for his own honour and glory. They truſt to his word, and rely upon his promiſes which therefore he will be careful to make good. This was the argument, which the Church pleaded in the time of eminent danger, to engage the care of God for them, *Pſal.* 74. 20. *Have reſpect unto the Covenant: for the dark places of the Earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. q. d.* O Lord, thy people are in the midſt of cruel enemies, take care for their protection, and though there be no worth in them, to which thou ſhouldeſt have reſpect, yet have reſpect unto thine own Covenant: let the glory of thy Name draw forth thy care to thy People.

SECT. II.

WE have seen the grounds and reasons of Gods care over his people, let us next view the extent and compass of this Divine care; and here methinks the Lord saith to his people as he said to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 13. 14, 15. *Lift up now thine eyes from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.* So here, poor timorous, dejected Believer, lift up thine eyes from the place where thou art, and take a view of all the promises in the Scriptures of truth; promises of supports under all burthens, supplies of all wants, deliverances out of all dangers, assistances in all distresses; to thee have I given them all as a portion for ever. This care of God walks the round, and encompasseth the Souls and Bodies of them that fear him, day and night. There is no interest or concern of either found without the line of his all-surrounding Care, and every one of his children are enfolded in his Fatherly arms, *Deut.* 33. 3. *All his Saints are in thy hand.* All and every one of their wants and streights are observed by this Care, in order to their supply, *Phil.* 4. 19. *My God shall supply all your wants.*

1. Great is the Care of God over the Bodies of his people, and all the dangers and necessities of them as they daily grow; your meat and drink are daily provided for you by your Fathers Care. *Psal.* 111. 5. *He hath given meat unto them that fear him; he will ever be mindful of his Covenant.* It is from this Care of thy Heavenly Father, that necessary provisions

viſions have been made for thee, of which it may be thou haſt had no foreſight: This is the God that hath fed thee all thy life long, *Gen.* 48. 15. It is from the ſame care thy body hath been cloathed, *Matth.* 6. 28. *How much more ſhall he cloath you, O ye of little faith?* It is through this Care, you ſleep in peace, and your reſt is made ſweet unto you, *Prov.* 3. 24. *When thou lyeſt down thou ſhalt not be afraid; yea, thou ſhalt lie down, and thy ſleep ſhall be ſweet.* In a word, thou oweſt all thy recoveries from dangerous diſeaſes, and narrow eſcapes from the grave, to this Care of thy God over thee, *He is the Lord that healeth thee, Exod.* 15. 26. That the incenſed humours of thy body had not overflowed their banks, like an inundation of the Sea, when they raged in thy dangerous diſeaſes, is only becauſe thy God took the care of thee, and ſet them their bounds.

2. Divine Care extends it ſelf to the Souls of all that fear God, and to all the concernments of their Souls; and manifeſtly diſcovers it ſelf in all the gracious proviſions it hath made for them. More particularly, it is from this tender Fatherly care that,

1. A Saviour was provided to redeem them when they were ruined and loſt by ſin, *Joh.* 3. 16. *Rom.* 8. 32.

2. That Spiritual cordials are provided to refreſh them in all their ſinking ſorrows, and inward diſtreſſes, *Pſal.* 94. 19.

3. That a door of deliverance is opened to them, when they are ſorely preſſed upon by temptations, and ready to be overwhelmed, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

4. That a ſtrength above their own comes in ſeaſonably to ſupport them, when they are almoſt overweighed with inward troubles, when great

weights are upon them, the everlasting arms are underneath them, *Psal.* 138. 3. *Isa.* 57. 16.

5. That their ruine is prevented when they are upon the dangerous and slippery brink of temptations, and their feet almost gone, *Psal.* 73. 12. *Hos.* 2. 6. 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

6. That they are recovered again after dangerous falls by sin, and not left as a prey and Trophy to their enemy, *Hos.* 14. 4.

7. That they are guided and directed in the right way, when they are at a loss, and know not what course to take, *Psal.* 16. 11. *Psal.* 73. 24.

8. That they are established and confirmed in Christ in the most shaking and overturning times of trouble and persecution; so that neither their heart turneth back, nor their steps decline from his ways, *Jer.* 32. 40. *Job.* 4. 14.

9. That they are upheld under Spiritual desertions, and recovered again out of that dismal darkness into the chearful light of Gods countenance, *Isa.* 57. 16.

10. That they are at last brought safe to Heaven through the innumerable hazards and dangers all along their way thither, *Heb.* 11. 16. In all these things the care of their God eminently discovers it self for their Souls.

3. Once more let us consider the Care of God for his people in the lovely properties thereof. As,

1. It is a Fatherly care, than which none is more great or tender, *Matth.* 6. 8. *Your father knoweth that you have need of all these things.* And indeed the greatest and tenderest care of an earthly Father is but a faint shadow of that tender care which is in the heart of God over his Children; for to that end we find

find them compared, *Matth.* 7. 11. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven, give good things to them which ask him.* The care of Parents is careleſneſs it ſelf, compared with that care which God takes of his.

2. The care of God is a univerſal care, watching over all his people in all ages, places and dangers, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* This was applyed by way of reproof to *Aſa*, who out of a ſinful diſtruſt of the care of God, relyed upon the help of *Syria*, as if there had not been a God in Heaven to take care of him and the people.

3. Gods care over his, is aſſiduous and continual; *his mercies are new every morning, great is his faithfulneſs, Lam.* 3. 22, 23. *He keeps his people night and day, Iſa.* 27. 3. Could Satan, or his inſtruments find ſuch an hour wherein the ſeven eyes of Providence ſhould be all aſleep, that would be the fatal hour to our Souls and Bodies; but he that keepeth *Iſrael* ſlumbereth not.

4. Gods care over his, is exceeding tender, far beyond the tenderneſs that the moſt affectionate mother ever felt in her heart towards the child that hanged on her breaſt, *Iſa.* 49. 15. *Can a mother forget her ſucking child*, &c. *they may, yet will not I forget thee.* The birds of the air are not ſo tender of their young in the neſt, as God is of his people in the world, *Iſa.* 31. 5. Mercy fills the heart of God, yea, tender mercy, yea, multitudes of tender mercies, *Pſal.* 51. 1.

5. The care of God is a ſeaſonable care, which is always ſure to nick the opportunity and proper ſeaſon of relieving his people; in the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen: The beauty of Providence is much ſeen in this thing, wherever you feel a want, this care finds a ſupply; and thus much briefly of the care of God abſolutely conſidered in it ſelf.

SECT. III.

IT remains that we alſo conſider the care of God in its twofold reſpect, *viz.*

1. To his Promiſes.
2. To his Providences.

1. There are multitudes of Promiſes found in the Scriptures, exactly fitted as ſo many keys to open the door of this comfortable Chamber to receive, and ſecure all that fear God, whatever their wants, fears, or diſtreſſes are. Theſe are reducible into two Claſſes, or ranks. *viz.*

1. More general and comprehenſive.
2. More particular Promiſes.

The general and more comprehenſive Promiſes are found in the general expreſſures of the Covenant, as that to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 1. *I am God Almighty, walk thou before me and be perfect. q. d.* Let it be thy care to walk exactly in the paths of obedience before me, and I will take care to ſupply all thy wants from the never failing fountain of my al-ſufficiency; and of the ſame tenour is that, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18.

I will

I will be to them a Father, and they ſhall be my ſons and daughters, *i. e.* Expect your proviſions and protections from my care, as children do from their father. More particularly, there are ſix ſorts of Promiſes, wherein the care of God is particularly made over to his people in the greateſt hazards and difficulties in this life. *viz.*

1. It is aſſigned and made over to them to ſupply all their needs, ſo far as the Glory of God and advancement of their Spiritual and eternal good ſhall require it, *Pſ.* 34.9. *They that fear the Lord ſhall not want any good thing.* All your livelihood is in that Promiſe; thence comes your daily bread; your own and your families meat is in that cupboard.

2. It is made over to the Church and people of God for their defence againſt all dangers, *Iſa.* 54.17. *No weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper.* This promiſe wards off all the deadly blows, and puts by all the mortal thruſts that are made at you; here the care of God forms it ſelf into a ſhield for your defence.

3. The care of God is engaged by promiſe for the moderation and mitigation of your afflictions, that they may not exceed your abilities to bear them, *Iſa.* 27. 8,9. *in meaſure when it ſhooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he ſtayeth the rough wind in the day of the eaſt-wind.* If the wind blow from a cold corner, this Promiſe moderates it, that it blow not a ſtorm; all the ſparing mercies and ſweetning circumſtances, which gracious Souls thankfully note in the ſharpeſt trials come from this promiſe, wherein the care of God is ingaged for that purpoſe.

4. Divine care is put under the bond of a promiſe, for the direction and guidance of all their troubles and trials to an happy iſſue, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things*

ſhall work together for good. From what quarter ſoever the wind bloweth, God will take care that it ſhall be uſeful to drive you to your Port; the very Providences that caſt you down, by vertue of this promiſe prove as ſerviceable and beneficial as thoſe that lift you up.

5. The care of God ſtands engaged in the promiſe for the help and aid of his people in all the extremities and exigencies of their lives, *Pſal.* 46. 1. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble.* Never is the care of God more viſible and conſpicuous, than in ſuch times of need.

6. Laſtly, the care of God is ingaged to carry his people ſafe through all the dangers of the way, and bring them all home to glory at laſt, *Joh.* 10. 28. *I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any man pluck them out of my hand.* This care of God thus engaged for you is your convoy to accompany and ſecure you till it ſee you ſafe into your harbour of eternal reſt.

2. You have heard how the care of God is engaged for you by promiſe; now ſee how it actuates, and exerts it ſelf for the people of God in the various methods of Providence; and here, oh here is the ſweeteſt pleaſure of the Chriſtians life, a delight far tranſcending all the delights of this life. Sit down Chriſtian in this Chamber alſo, and make but ſuch obſervations upon the care of thy God as follow, and then tell me whether the world with all its pleaſures and delights can give thee ſuch an other entertainment.

1. Reflect upon the conſtant, ſweet, and ſuitable proviſions that from time to time have been prepared for thee and thine, by this care of thy God; From whence ſoever thy wants did come, I am ſure from hence

hence came thy ſupplies, it hath enabled thee to return the ſame anſwer the diſciples did to that queſtion, *Luke* 22.35. *Lacked ye any thing, and they ſaid nothing.*

2. Reflect with admiration upon the various difficulties of your lives, wherein your thoughts have been entangled, and out of which you have been extricated and delivered by the care of God over you: How oft have your thoughts been like a ravelled skeyn of ſilk, ſo entangled and perplexed with the difficulties and fears before you, that you could find no end, but the longer you thought, the more you were puzled, till you have left thinking, and fell to praying; and there you have found the right end to wind up all your thoughts upon the bottom of peace and ſweet contentment, according to that direction, *Pſal.* 37.5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.*

3. Obſerve with a melting heart how the care of thy God hath diſpoſed and directed thy way to unforeſeen advantages; had he not ordered thy ſteps when, and as he did, thou hadſt not been in poſſeſſion of thoſe Temporal and Spiritual mercies that ſweeten thy life at this day. Surely the ſteps of good men are ordered by the Lord; and as for thee Chriſtian, what reaſon haſt thou with an heart overflowing with love and thankfulneſs to look up and ſay, *My father thou art the guide of my youth*? It is ſweet to live by faith upon Divine care. Oh what a Serene life might we live, careful for nothing, but making known our requeſt unto God in every thing, *Phil.* 4. 6. caſting all our care on him that careth for us, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. perplexing our thoughts about nothing, but rolling every burthen upon godly Faith. Thus lived holy *Muſculus* when reduced to extreme poverty, and danger

danger at the same time; then it was that he solaced his Soul with that comfortable *Distich*, a good lesson for others,

Est Deus in cœlis, qui providus omnia curat,
Credentes nusquam deseruisse potest.

The Provident care of his heavenly father, made his heart as quiet as the child at the breast Christian, thou knowest not what distressful days are coming upon the earth, nor what personal trials shall befal thee in this world; but I advise thee as thou valuest the tranquility and comfort of thy life: Shut up thy self by Faith in this Chamber of Divine Care, it is thy best security in this world: Reflect frequently and thankfully upon the manifold supports, supplies, and salvations thou hast already had from this fountain of mercies, and be not discouraged at new difficulties. When an eminent Christian was told of some that way-laid him to destroy him; his answer was, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* In like manner thou mayest say, if God had not taken care for thee, how couldst thou have lived till now? How couldest thou have overlived so many troubles, fears, and dangers as thou hast done?

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Opening the sixth and last Chamber, viz. *The Love of God, as a resting place to believing Souls in evil times.*

SECT. I.

THough all the Attributes in the name or Chambers of this house of God are glorious, and excellent; yet this of love is transcendently glorious: Of this room it may be said as it was of *Solomon*'s royal Chariot, *Cant.* 3.10. *The midst thereof is paved with love.* In this Attribute the glory of God is signally and eminently manifested, 1 *John* 4. 9, 10. And upon this foundation the hopes and comforts of all Believers are built and founded, *Rom.* 8. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* He defies and despises them all, because neither of them alone, nor all together by their united strength, can unclasp the arms of Divine Love, in which Believers are safely enfolded. In this Attribute Gods people by Faith entrench themselves, and of it a Believer saith, *Hic murus aheneus esto,* this shall be my strong hold and fortress in the day of trouble, and well may we so esteem and reckon it, if we consider,

1. That wherever the special love of God goes, there the special presence of God goes also, *John* 14. 23. *He shall be loved of my father, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* And O how

how ſecure and ſafe muſt thoſe be (however times govern) with whom God himſelf maketh his abode! For as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 91. 1. *He that dwells in the ſecret place of the moſt high, ſhall abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty.* And he that is overſhadowed by an Almighty power, needs not fear how many mighty enemies combine againſt him.

2. Wherever the ſpecial love of God is placed, that perſon becomes precious and highly valuable in the eyes of God; he appretiates and eſtimates ſuch a man as his peculiar treaſure, which naturally and neceſſarily draws and ſpreads the wing of Divine care over him for his protection; *Deuteron.* 33. 12. *The beloved of the Lord ſhall dwell in ſafety by him, and the Lord ſhall cover him all the day long.* Things of greateſt value are always kept in ſafeſt cuſtody.

3. Upon whoſoever the ſpecial love of God is ſet, there all events and iſſues of troubles are ſure to be over ruled to the eternal advantage of that Soul, *Rom.* 8. 28. Which conſideration alone is ſufficient to unſting all the troubles in the world, and make the beloved of the Lord ſhout and triumph in the midſt of tribulations.

But let us enter yet further into this glorious Chamber of Divine love, and more particularly view the admirable properties thereof, though when all is done, it will be found a love paſſing knowledge; our thoughts may admire, but can never meaſure it.

1. And firſt you will find it an ancient love, whoſe ſpring is in eternity it ſelf. Believer, God is thine ancient friend, who foreſaw and loved thee, before thou, yea, before this world was in being; the fruits and effects thereof thou gathereſt in time, but the root

that

that produces them was before all times, *Prov.* 8. 22, 23. *The Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.* Thus was the love of God contriving, and providing the beſt of mercies in Chriſt for us; while as yet there were no ſuch creatures in the world, nor a world prepared to receive us.

2 The love of God to his people is a free, and altogether undeſerved love; it muſt needs be ſo ſeeing it prevented our very being, which had it not done, yet no motives had been found in us, to allure it to us more than others, *Deut.* 7. 7. *The Lord did not ſet his love upon you, nor chuſe you, becauſe ye were more in number than any people, (for ye were the feweſt of all people) but becauſe the Lord loved you.* So that we cannot find one ſtone of our own merit in the foundation of this love; for thoſe whom it embraceth in its arms are, *Immerentes, & malè merentes*, ill deſerving as well as undeſerving, we were loved of God, before we were lovely in our ſelves; it is freely pitched upon us, not purchaſed by us, *Iſa.* 43. 24.

3. The love of God to Believers is a bountiful love, ſtreaming forth continually mercies both innumerable and invaluable to their Souls and Bodies, 2 *Pet.* 1. 3. Chriſtian, it would quickly weary thine arm, yea, let me ſay the arm of an *Angel*; but to write down the thouſandth part of the mercies which have already flowed out of this precious fountain to thee; though all thou haſt received, or ſhalt receive in this world, are but the beginnings of mercy, and firſt-fruits of the love of God to thee; 'tis the love of God which daily loads thee with benefits, as the expreſſion is, *Pſal.* 68. 19. And if thou art daily loaded with

with mercies, what an heap of mercies will the mercies of thy whole life be.

4. The love of God to believers is a diſtinguiſhing love, not the portion of all, no, nor yet of many beſides thee, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. The generality of the world dwell in the Room of common Providence, not in the Chamber of ſpecial love into which God hath admitted thee; this conſideration ſhould make thee break out in admiration, as it is, *John* 14. 22. Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf to me, and not to the world.

5. The love of God to believers, is a love tranſcendent to all creature love, it moves in an higher Sphere than the love of any creature doth, *Rom.* 5. 6, 7, 8. We read of *Jacob*'s love to *Rachel*, which is ſo celebrated in the Sacred ſtory for the fervour of it, and yet all that it enabled him to ſuffer was but the Summers heat and the Winters cold; a trifle to what the love of Chriſt engaged, and enabled him to ſuffer for thy ſake. We read alſo of the love of *David* to *Abſalom* which made him wiſh, would God I had died for thee, O *Abſalom*, my ſon, my ſon. This love was only manifeſted in a wiſh, which haply might have been retracted too, had there been an exchange to be made indeed; but the life of Chriſt, worth millions of his life, was actually and willingly ſtaked down for thy Soul. We read of the love of one Diſciple manifeſted to another Diſciple in a cup of cold water; but Chriſt hath manifeſted his love to thee in pouring out his warmeſt heart bloud for thy redemption. Oh what a tranſcendent love is the Divine love!

6. To conclude, (though alas little is ſaid of the love of God,) it is an everlaſting and unchangeable love. Hills and mountains ſhall ſooner ſtart from their

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Baſet, than his loving kindneſs depart from his people, *Iſa.* 54.10. Though he afflict us, ſtill he loves us, *Pſal.* 89. 32, 33. Nay, though we grieve him, yet ſtill he loves us, *Mark* 16. 7. *Tell the Diſciples, and tell* Peter. *Peter* had grieved Chriſt, denied Chriſt, yet will he not renounce nor caſt off *Peter*.

SECT. II.

WEll then, if God have opened to your Souls ſuch a Chamber of love, where your Souls may be raviſhed with daily delights, as well as ſecured from danger and ruine: O that you would enter into it by Faith, and dwell for ever in the love of God! I mean, clear up your intereſt in it, and then ſolace your Souls in the delights of it. Need I to uſe an Argument, or ſpend one Motive to preſs you to enter into ſuch an Heaven upon Earth? If the deadneſs of thy heart doth need it, take into conſideration, Reader, theſe few that follow.

1. *Motive.* Ponder with thy ſelf how ſad and miſerable the caſe will be with thee in the days of calamity and diſtreſs, if the love of God ſhall then be clouded to thy Soul; in thoſe days ſuch as love thee will either be abſent from thee, or impotent to help thee, all thy friends and familiars may be removed far off, and whither then wilt thou turn ſhould God be far off too? This was that evil which *Jeremiah* ſo vehemently deprecated, *Chap.* 17. *v.* 17. *Be not a terrour unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil.* q. d. O Lord my Soul depends upon refreſhment, and comfort from thee, when all the ſprings of earthly comfort are dried up. Shouldeſt thou be a terrour to me in the day of evil, it will be the moſt terrible diſap-

diſappointment that ever befel my Soul; if thou be kind, I care not who be cruel if I have the love of God, I value not the hatred of men; but if God be a terrour, who or what can be a comforter? The love of God is the alone refuge to which the gracious Soul retreats upon all creature diſappointments, and failings. This therefore is the main thing to be feared againſt the evil day.

2. *Mot.* The knowledge and aſſurance of the love of God is a mercy attainable by a gracious Soul, notwithſtanding the imperfections of Grace. *Peter* had his falls and failings as well as other Chriſtians, yet when Chriſt puts the queſtion home to him, *Joh.* 21. 15. Simon *ſon of* Jonas *loveſt thou me more than theſe*, he was able to return a clear poſitive anſwer; *Yea, Lord thou knoweſt that I love thee.* Study thy heart Chriſtian, and ſtudy the Scriptures; if thou canſt find the ſincere love of God in thy heart, that Scripture will clear the love of God to thy Soul, 1 *John* 4. 19. *We love him becauſe he firſt loved us.* If thou lay thine hand upon a ſtone wall, and feel it warm, thou mayeſt conclude the Sun beams have ſhone upon it; for warmth is not naturally in dead ſtones. Our love to God is but the reflex beam of his love to us, and we know there can be no reflex without a direct beam. Thouſands of Chriſtians do at this day actually poſſeſs the raviſhing ſenſe of Divine love, whoſe fears and complaints have been the ſame that thine now are; that God who indulged this favour to them, can do as much for thee.

3. *Mot.* Think how well thou wilt be provided for the worſt and difficulteſt times, when the love of of God ſhall be well ſecured to thy Soul; when the love of God, *i. e.* the ſenſe of his love is once ſhed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt, which for that

that end, among others, is given unto us, we shall then be able to glory in tribulation, *Rom.* 5. 3, 5. We may then bid defiance to all the adverse powers of hell, and earth, and say, Now do your worst: we are out of your reach, and above all your terrors and affrights. Be advised then to sit close to this work: clear but this point once, and the worst is past. O lye at the feet of God night and day, give him no rest, take no denial from him, fill thy mouth with pleas and arguments; tell him, Lord, it is neither for Corn nor Wine that I seek thee, but only for thy love; bestow thy other gifts upon whom thou wilt, only seal up thy love to my soul.

And Lastly, I advise thee, *Reader*, to be exceeding careful, when God admits thee into the sense of his love, to shut the door behind thee, lest thy soul be soon expelled thence, by the subtlety of Satan, who envies nothing more, than such an happiness as this: that envious Spirit totally despairs of the least drop of such a mercy, and therefore swells with envy at thine enjoyment of it; but if ever thou fasten thy hand of faith upon this mercy, loose not thy hold by every objection with which he will rap thy fingers.

1. If he object the many sharp afflictions, and manifold rods of God upon thee, call not the Love of God in question for that; but remember what he saith, *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* Fatherly Corrections are so far from being inconsistent with the love of God, that his love is rather questionable without them, than for them; they are love tokens, not marks of hatred.

2. Yield not up thy claim and title to the love of God, because he sometimes hides away his face

from thee; thou knoweſt the ſun is up, and going on in its regular courſe, in the darkeſt and cloſeſt day. *My God, my God*, ſaith Chriſt himſelf, *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* believe he is ſtill thy God, and his love immutable, when the ſenſe and manifeſtations thereof do fail.

3. Call not the Love of God into queſtion, becauſe of thy great vileneſs and unworthineſs; ſay not when thou moſt loatheſt thy ſelf, God muſt needs loath thee too; he can love where thou loatheſt. *Return, return, O* Shulamite, *return, return, that we may look upon thee: what will ye ſee in the* Shulamite? *as it were the company of two armies.* The Spouſe was exceeding beautiful in the eyes of others, when moſt baſe and vile in her own: What would you ſee in the *Shulamite?* alas, there is nothing in me, at the beſt, but Conflicts, and Wars, betwixt Grace and Corruption, as it were betwixt two Armies, *Cant.* 6. 13.

4. Quit not thy claim to the Love of God, becauſe he ſeems to ſhut out thy Prayers, and delays to anſwer the long continued deſires and importunities of thy ſoul in ſome caſes. *David* would neither cenſure his God, no nor call in queſtion his intereſt in him, becauſe of ſuch a delay and ſilence, *Pſal.* 22. 1, 2. *My God, my God.* The claim is doubled, *ver.* 1. and yet in the next breath he ſaith, *I cry in the day time, but thou heareſt not, and in the night ſeaſon, and am not ſilent.*

Thus I have offered you ſome advice and aſſiſtance, how to ſecure your ſelves in theſe Divine Attributes, *viz.* The Power, Wiſdom, Faithfulneſs, Unchangeableneſs, Care, and Love of God, as in ſo many Sanctuaries, and comfortable Refuges in the days of Common Calamity. It is noted even of the

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Egyptians, when the ſtorm of Hail was coming upon the Land, *Exod.* 9. 20. *He that feared the Word of the Lord among the ſervants of* Pharaoh, *made his ſervants and his cattle flee into the houſes.* Let not an *Egyptian* take more care of his Beaſts, than Chriſtians of their Souls. Stormy days are coming, God hath provided you a Refuge, and given you ſeaſonable Præmonitions, and Calls from Heaven, to haſten into them, before Deſolations come. The Lord help us to hear his Calls, and comply with them, which will be as much our Priviledge, as it is our Duty. And ſo much of the *Fifth Propoſition*, viz. That God's Attributes, Promiſes, and Providences, are prepared for the ſecurity of his people in the greateſt diſtreſſes that befal them in the world.

PROPOSITION VI.

That none but God's own People are taken into theſe Chambers of Security, or can expect his ſpecial Protection in Evil Times.

SECT. I.

THis *Propoſition* deſcribes and clears the qualified ſubject of this Priviledge. God's own People, and none but ſuch can warrantably claim ſpecial protection in evil times, and this is conſonant to the current account of Scripture, *Iſa.* 3. 10, 11. *Say ye unto the righteous, it ſhall be well with him. Wo to the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him.* He ſpeaks con-

cerning the day of *Jeruſalem*'s ruin, and *Judah*'s fall, as appears, *ver.* 8. So great a difference will God make even in this world, betwixt the righteous, and the wicked. In *Nah.* 1. you have alſo a terrible day deſcribed, wherein *Baſhan*, *Carmel*, and *Lebanon*, the moſt pleaſant and fruitful places of the land ſhall languiſh. *ver.* 4. The mountains ſhall quake, the hills melt, the earth, and thoſe that dwell therein burnt up. *ver.* 5. The indignation and fury of God poured out like fire. *v.* 6. The priviledged people in this terrible day are God's own people, they only are taken into ſecurity. *ver.* 7. The Lord is good, a ſtrong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that truſt in him, *i.e.* he ſo knoweth them, as to care and provide for them in that evil day, and ſo throughout the whole Scripture, you ſhall find the Promiſes of protection ſtill made to the people of God. When the *Chaldean* Army, like a devouring fire, was ready to ſeize upon the Land, the ſinners in *Sion* were afraid, fearfulneſs ſurpriſed the hypocrites, for who among us (ſay they) ſhall dwell with devouring fire, and everlaſting burning. Yes, ſaith God, ſome there are that ſhall abide that day, *viz.* *He that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly; he ſhall dwell on high, his place of defence ſhall be the munition of rocks.* *i.e.* God will be a ſanctuary to them, when others ſhall be as ſtubble before the flames, *Iſa.* 33. 14, 15, 16.

But for the right ſtating of this Propoſition, three things muſt be heedfully adverted.

1. That all good men are not always exempted from the ſtroke of outward Calamities; in that ſenſe the righteous may periſh, and merciful men be taken away, yea, they may periſh in love, and be taken away in mercy from the evil to come, *Iſa.* 57. 1. 2. *Mica.* 7. 1, 2.

2. That

2. That all wicked men are not all always expoſed to external miſeries, but *a juſt man may periſh in his righteouſneſs, and a wicked man prolong his life in his wickedneſs*, Eccleſ. 7. 15.

3. But in this ſenſe, we are to underſtand the Propoſition, That none, but the people of God, have right, by promiſe, to his ſpecial protections in evil days, and that all ſuch ſhall either be preſerved from the ſtroke of calamities, or from the deadly ſting, namely Eternal Ruin, by them; though they ſhould fall by the hands of enemies, yet they die, as *Joſiah* did, in peace, 2 *King.* 22. 19, 20. If they be taken away, it is but out of the way of greater miſchiefs; death doth but lay the Saints in their beds of reſt, when it hurries away others into everlaſting miſeries: if they be not excuſed from troubles, yet their troubles are ſure to be ſanctified to their eternal good, *Rom.* 8.28. And the Lord will be with them in their troubles, *Pſal.* 91. 15. *Iſa.* 41. 10.

Two things remain to be conſidered, before we finiſh this laſt Propoſition: *viz.*

1. Who the People of God are?
2. Why this Priviledge is peculiar to them?

1. Who are the People of God? The Scripture deſcribes them two ways; Negatively, and Poſitively; Negatively, in oppoſition to thoſe who are not the people of God, but are (1.) the ſervants of ſin, obeying it in the luſt of it, which the people of God neither are, nor dare to do, *Rom.* 6. 11, 12. *&c.* (2.) The men of this world, who have the portion in this life, ſavouring, and minding the things of the world only, whereas the people of God are called out of the world, *Joh.* 17. 16. and principally

ſtudy, and labour after the higher concernments of the world to come, *Rom.* 8. 5. (3.) The vaſſals of Satan doing his luſt, and in ſubjection to his power, *Acts* 26. 18. *Epheſ.* 2. 2. from which bondage the people of God are made free. (4.) Nor yet are they their own, living wholly to themſelves, and ſeeking only their own ends, as others do, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. Theſe, all theſe are not the people of God, God will not own them for ſuch; they but deceive themſelves in thinking, and calling themſelves ſo: but then *Poſitively.* They are (1.) a people regenerated, and born again, *Joh.* 1. 13. Their regeneration gives them both the eſſence and denomination of the people of God: it is as impoſſible to be the children of God, without regeneration, as it is to be the children of men without generation. (2.) They are a people in covenant with God, *Ezek.* 16. 8. *I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine.* For in this Covenant they give themſelves to the Lord, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. They avouch the Lord to be their God, and make over themſelves to him to be his people, *Jer.* 31. 33. devoting unto God all that they are, their ſouls, and bodies, with every faculty and member incluſively, *Rom.* 12. 1. *Luk.* 10. 27. All that they have, *Rom.* 11. 36. all is dedicated, and devoted to the Lords uſe and ſervice, and theſe only are the people of God.

2. The laſt thing to be cleared is, Why the people of God, and none beſide them, have this peculiar priviledge of an hiding place in the day of trouble; and the grounds of it are:

1. Becauſe they only have ſpecial intereſt in God, and propriety is the ground on which they claim and expect protection, I am thine, ſave me, *Pſ.* 119. 94. Upon this very ground it was, that *David* encouraged

raged himſelf in one of his greateſt plunges, and diſtreſſes of his whole life, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. *But* David *encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.*

2. The people of God only are at peace with God; and where there is no peace, there can be no protection: the Harbours and Garriſons of one Kingdom never receive into their Protection, the Subjects of another Kingdom, that are in open Hoſtility againſt them. Now there is open War betwixt God, and the wicked, *Pſal.* 7. 11. *Zech.* 11. 8. Till they have peace with God, they can claim no protection from God.

3. The promiſes of protection are made only to Gods people, and where there is no promiſe, there can be no warrantably claim to protection, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. Common providence may ſhelter them for a time, but the Saints only have the keys of the promiſes which open the Chambers, or Attributes of God, to them.

4. None but the people of God walk in the ways of God, and none but thoſe that walk in his way can groundedly expect his protection; for ſo runs the promiſe, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. *I am with you, whileſt you are with me. i. e.* I am with you, by way of Protection, Direction, Supportation, and Salvation: whileſt you are with me in the duties of Obedience, and exerciſes of your Graces, ſee that you love, fear, and obey me; and then depend upon it, I will look after, and take care of you.

5. To conclude, The people of God only flee to God for ſanctuary, and caſt themſelves upon him for protection, *Pſal.* 56. 3. *At what time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee, Pſal.* 18. 2. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortreſs, and my deliverer; my God, my ſtrength, in whom I will truſt, my buckler, and the*

horn of my ſalvation, and my high-tower. This their confidence in God, and reliance upon him, engages him to protect them in their dangers, *Iſa.* 26. 3. All others put themſelves out of Gods protection, by making fleſh their arm, and ſo giving the honour of God to the creature, *Jer.* 17. 5. And thus much for clearing this laſt Propoſition alſo. All that remains, will be diſpatched in brief and cloſe Application of the Point thus opened and confirmed.

CHAP. XII.

Containing the firſt Uſe of the Point, in ſeveral informing Conſectaries, and Deductions of truth from it.

SECT. I.

Conſect. 1. FRom the whole of this Diſcourſe, we may be informed, *What a miſerable, and ſhiftleſs People all thoſe will be, in times of trouble, who have no ſpecial intereſt in God or the Promiſes.* Sad and lamentable was the caſe of *Saul*, as it is by himſelf expreſſed, 1 *Sam.* 28. 15. *I am ſore diſtreſſed, for the* Philiſtines *make war againſt me, and God is departed from me, and anſwereth me no more.* It is a wonderful, and unaccountable thing, how carnal men and women ſubſiſt, and bear up, when their earthly props, and hopes, ſink under, and fail them; ſo long as any creature-comfort is left, thither they will

will retreat, for relief, and ſuccour; but if all fail, as quickly they may, Whither will they turn for comfort, having not a God, nor a Promiſe to flee to? which the people of God can do, when all things elſe fail them, *Heb.* 3. 17. Their different conditions in the day of trouble, is clearly expreſſed in *Zeph.* 2. 3, 4. *Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs, it may be ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lords anger.* There is Gods *may be*, which is better ſecurity than mans *ſhall be*, for their temporal deliverance; But what ſhall become of others, that have no refuge, but in the creature? Why, the miſery and ſhiftleſſneſs of their condition, follows in the next words; Gaza *ſhall be forſaken, and* Aſhkelon *a deſolation, they ſhall drive out* Aſhdod *at noon-day, and* Ekron *ſhall be rooted up. i. e.* All their earthly ſecurities ſhall fail them; their ſtrong hold ſhall not ſecure them, they ſhall find no ſhelter in the ſcorching heat of the day of trouble. *Moab*, *Aſhdod*, and *Ekron*, have no more benefit, by the Promiſes made to *Sion*, than the Inhabitants of *Rome*, can claim by the Charter of *London*. If a wicked or hypocritical perſon cry to God in his diſtreſs, he will not hear him, *Prov.* 1. 25, 26. *Job* 27. 9. but will bid him go to his earthly refuges, which he hath choſen; if he go to the promiſes, knock at thoſe doors of hope, they cannot relieve him, being all made in Chriſt to believers; if to the Name and Attributes of God, all the dores are ſhut againſt them, *Pſal.* 34. 16. There are Seven dreadful Aggravations of a wicked man's troubles; (1.) When troubles come upon him, the Curſe of God follows him into his carnal refuges, *Jer.* 17. 5. *Curſed be the man, that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth*

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from the Lord. Trouble is the Arrow, and this curſe the venom of the Arrow, which makes the Wound incurable.

2. When troubles fall upon him from without, a guilty conſcience will terrifie him from within. So that the mind can give no relief to the body; but both ſink under their own weights; it is not ſo with the people of God, they have inward relief under outward preſſures, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16.

3. The guſts and ſtorms of wicked mens troubles may blow them into Hell, and hurry them into eternal deſtruction: if Death march towards them upon the pale Horſe, hell always follows him, *Rev.* 6. 8.

4. If troubles and diſtreſſes overwhelm their hearts, they can give them no vent or eaſe by prayer, faith and reſignation to God, as his People uſe to do, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18.

5. When their troubles and diſtreſſes come, then comes the hour, and power of their temptation, and to ſhun ſorrow they will fall into ſin, having no promiſe to be kept in the hour of temptation, as the Saints have, *Rev.* 3. 10.

6. When their troubles come they will be left alone in the midſt of them; theſe are their burthens, and they alone muſt bear them. Gods gracious, comfortable ſupporting preſence, is only with his own people,

7. If trouble or death come upon them as a ſtorm, they have no Anchor of Hope to drop in the Storm, *The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs: but the righteous hath hope in his death, Prov.* 14. 32. by all which it appears that a Chriſtleſs perſon is a moſt helpleſs, and ſhiftleſs creature in the day of trouble.

2. *Conſect.*

2. *Conſect.* Secondly, Hence it follows, *That Chriſtians ought not to droop like other men in the day of trouble.* A Wicked mans boldneſs, and a Chriſtians cowardlineſs in times of affliction, are alike ungrounded and uncomly; Why ſhould thy heart Chriſtian deſpond and ſink at this rate, upon the proſpect of approaching troubles? Are there not ſafe and comfortable Chambers taken up, and provided for thee againſt that day? Is not the name of the Lord a ſtrong Tower into which thou mayeſt run and be ſafe? The heart of a good man, ſaith *Chryſoſtome*, ſhould at all times be like the higher Heavens, ſerene, tranquil and clear, whatever Thunders and Lightnings, Storms and Tempeſts, trouble and terrifie the lower World. If a man have a good Roof over his head, where he can ſit dry and warm, what need he trouble himſelf, to hear the Winds roar, the Lightnings flaſh, and the Rains pour down without doors? Why, this is thy priviledge, Chriſtian, *A man* (to wit, the man Chriſt Jeſus) *ſhall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land,* Iſa. 32. 2. Art thou in Chriſt and in the Covenant, give me then one good reaſon for thy dejections in a day of trouble, or if thou haſt none to give, hearken to theſe Reaſons againſt it.

1. If thou be in Chriſt, thy Sins are forgiven thee, and why ſhould not a pardoned Soul be a chearful Soul in adverſity? Afflictions may buz and hum about thee, like Bees that have loſt their Sting, but they can never hurt thee.

2. If thou be in Chriſt, thy God is with thee in all thy troubles, and how can thy heart ſink or faint

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in ſuch a preſence? Let them that are alone in troubles fail under them, but don't thou do ſo, that art ſurrounded with Almighty Power, Grace and Love, *Iſa.* 43. 1, 2.

3. If thou be in Chriſt, thy greateſt afflictions ſhall prove thy beſt Friends and Benefactors, *Rom.* 8. 28. Sure then, thou art more afraid than hurt, thou miſtakeſt thy beſt Friends, for thy worſt Enemies; thou and thy Afflictions ſhall part more comfortably than you met.

4. If thou be in Chriſt, thy Treaſure is ſafe, thy eternal happineſs is out of the reach of all thine Enemies, *Luk.* 12. 4. *Luk.* 10. 42. And if that be ſafe thou haſt no cauſe to be ſad; to droop, and tremble at the hazard of earthly comforts, whileſt heavenly and eternal things are ſafe, is as if a man that had gotten his Pardon from the King, and had it ſafe in his Boſom, ſhould be found weeping upon the way home, becauſe he hath loſt his Staff or Glove. Theſe reaſons are ſtrong againſt the dejections of Gods people under outward troubles; but yet I am ſenſible that all the reaſoning in the world will not prevent their dejections, except they will take pains to clear up their Intereſt in God againſt ſuch a day, *Pſal.* 18. 2. and will act their faith, by way of adherence and dependance upon God in the want of former light and evidence, *Iſa.* 50. 10. And laſtly, that they keep their conſciences pure and inviolate, which will be a ſpring of comfort in the midſt of troubles, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12.

3. *Conſect.* Thirdly, *It hence appears to be the greateſt folly, and vanity in the world to make any thing but God, our refuge in the day of trouble.* This practice as you heard but now, is under Gods curſe, and

and that which is curſed of God, can never be comfortable to us. It is an honour peculiar to God, the right of Heaven, and therefore curſed Sacriledge to beſtow it on the Creature. We read of ſome that make lies their refuge, and hide themſelves under Falſhood, thinking when the overflowing Scourge comes it ſhall not come nigh unto them, *Iſa.* 28. 15. They will truſt to their wits and policies, they will fawn and flatter, lye and diſſemble, caſt themſelves into a thouſand ſhapes and forms to ſave themſelves; but all in vain, the Flood ſhall ſweep away their refuge of lyes. Others make Riches their truſt and confidence, *Prov.* 10. 15. *The rich mans wealth is his ſtrong city.* If Enemies come their money ſhall be their ranſom; but oh, what a poor refuge will this be? It may betray but cannot ſecure them, *Behold, ſaith God, I will ſtir up the* Medes *againſt them, which ſhall not regard ſilver, and as for gold, they ſhall not delight in it*, Iſa. 13. 17. Riches profit not in the day of wrath, *Prov.* 11. 4. *Job* bleſſed God in the day of his adverſity, that he had not made Gold his Hope, or the fine Gold his Confidence, *Job* 31. 24. Bleſs not thou thy ſelf that thou haſt ſuch things to beſtow thy hope and truſt upon. Others make Men their Refuge, eſpecially great and powerful Men, but to how little purpoſe is it! *Put not your truſt in Princes, nor in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help*, Pſal. 146. 3, 4. They cannot keep their Crowns upon their Heads, no, nor their Heads upon their Shoulders, the greateſt Men are but Duſt, and what can Duſt do to Duſt? Three things aggravate their miſery, who miſplace their Confidence by beſtowing it on any Creature. 1. That Creature will certainly deceive them, men are deceitful men, *Pſal.* 62. 9. Riches are

deceitful

deceitful riches, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. Every thing you lean on, beſide God, will ſtart aſide, like a deceitful bow, *Pſal.* 78. 57. (2.) The diſappointment of your hopes from the creature, will enflame your affliction, and greatly aggravate your ſorrow, 2 *King.* 18. 21. The broken reeds of *Egypt* will not only fail, but pierce you. (3.) In a word, God will take none into his protection, who make any thing beſides himſelf their hope and confidence; if we fly from God to the creature, God will ſay to the creature, thou ſhalt go, except I have thy dependence, thou ſhalt never have my protection; where I have no honour, thou ſhalt have no comfort.

4. *Conſect.* Fourthly, The former diſcourſe, yields us alſo this comfortable concluſion, *That what ever confuſions, deſolations, and troubles be in the earth, the Church and People of God can never be wholly exterminated, and deſtroyed, ſeeing ſuch a ſecure refuge is prepared for them of God,* Pſal. 102. 28. *The children of thy ſervants ſhall continue, and their ſeed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee.* Which is aſſigned as the true reaſon of its perpetuity and ſafety, *Pſal.* 48. 3. *God is known in her palaces, for a refuge.* The Church's Enemies have tried the utmoſt of their policies and powers in all Ages againſt it, but to no purpoſe: whileſt they have been plotting and perſecuting, the preſerved Remnant have been ſinging their Song upon *Alamoth,* even praiſes to their great preſerver; though they have no external viſible defence, yet are they as ſafe, as ſalvation it ſelf can make them, *for ſalvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks,* Iſa. 26. 1, 2. Four things are exceeding remarkable in the Churches preſervation: (1.) No people were ever ſo fiercely oppoſed by the powers

powers of this world, *The Kings of the earth have ſet themſelves, and the Rulers have taken counſel together*, Pſal. 2. 2. All methods and artifices have been tryed, ſometimes to jeer and ſcoff them out of the Religion: ſo did the Apoſtate *Julian*, and ſometimes by cruel tortures, to affright them from their Religion; the variety and more than barbarous inhumanity, whereof the Church Hiſtories give us a ſad and amazing account. (2.) Under theſe cruel Perſecutions, they have ſeemed to be utterly loſt, to the eye of ſence and reaſon; *I am left alone*, ſaid *Elijah*, *and they ſeek my life*, 1 King. 19. 10. *By whom, Lord, ſhall* Jacob *ariſe, ſaid* Amos, *for he is very ſmall?* Amos 7. 2. (3.) Notwithſtanding all which, the Church hath overlived all its dangers; it is the true *Phœnix*, which hath outlived the Deluge. (4.) Such deliverances are proper and peculiar to the Church alone: no people, beſides the people of God, have ſuch ſalvations upon record. The great and famous Monarchies of the world, have daſhed one another to pieces, like earthen Potſheards

——*Sic Medus ademit*
Aſſyrio, Syroq; tulit moderamina Perſes.

And all this by vertue of that promiſe, *Jer.* 30. 11. *For I am with thee*, ſaith the Lord, *to ſave thee, though I make a full end of all Nations, whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.*

5. *Conſect.* Fifthly, to conclude: If this be ſo, *then it is a deep and dangerous policy of Satan, to ſhut up our refuge in God againſt us, as much as may be in times of trouble.* Satan, like a cunning Fowler, deſpairs of getting the birds in his net, except he can beat them out of their coverts; it is therefore his great Deſign, to eſtrange and alienate the Saints from

from their God, as much as he can, thereby to cut off their retreat to him in times of trouble; a miſchief which the people of God have always vehemently deprecated, *Pſal.* 102. 2. *Jer.* 17. 17. And O that we would be ware of it! and ſhun this miſchief, by our ſeaſonable preventing watchfulneſs. There are, among others, Three ſpecial Projects of Satan, whereby he manages this miſchievous deſign againſt the people of God.

1. By drawing their Conſciences under guilt, on purpoſe to deſtroy the liberty, freedom, and child-like confidence of their ſouls, in their addreſſes to God. This, if any thing in the world, will do it, *Job* 11. 14, 15. What a loſs will that poor ſoul be at, in times of trouble, whoſe grumbling and condemning conſcience will not ſuffer him to look up chearfully and believingly in the face of its God, and Father, having loſt its ancient freedom at the throne of grace?

2. By prevailing with them to neglect and intermit the courſe of their daily duties, and thereby to let down their communion with God, and in a great meaſure loſe their acquaintance with him. This is a dangerous policy of the Devil, and an unſpeakable prejudice to the ſoul: Oh Chriſtian, take heed of a lazy ſloathful ſpirit, or a vain and earthly heart, which will eaſily ſuffer the duties of Religion to be joſtled aſide, and put by for every trivial occaſion; eſpecially beware of ſlight, formal, ſuperficial, and dead-hearted performances of duty, which is little better than the intermiſſion of them, it may indeed prevent the ſcandal, but can never give thee the comfort of Religion.

3. By beclouding their intereſt in God, and darkening their titles and evidences, by thick clouds of

of doubts and fears. This is the ſad caſe of many a poor Chriſtian, in a day of trouble, with out-fightings, with in-fears. Brethren, I beſeech you, think often what thoſe things are, which uſually put men into ſuch frights and ſtreights, when eminent dangers ſtare them in the face, what it is that daunts and damps the hearts of Chriſtians at ſuch times; and as you value the peace and freedom of your ſouls with God, give not matter for your conſciences to reproach you with miſ-ſpent time, indulged ſins, neglected duties, formality or hypocriſie in duties, ſiniſter, and by-ends in your tranſactions with God or man: preſerve the purity and peace of your conſciences, as you would preſerve your two eyes; if by ſuch wiles the Devil cannot bar you from your God, or ſhut up your refuge in him, your outward troubles can do you no hurt.

The Second Uſe, Of Direction and Advice.

Sect. II.

THe providence of God in theſe days, giving us ſuch loud warnings of approaching judgment; How are all that are wiſe in heart, and of underſtanding of the times, now more eſpecially concerned to clear their intereſt in theſe bleſſed Attributes of God, which have here been opened, as their only refuge in the evil day. Let me therefore perſuade, and preſs you to betake your ſelves to God, your refuge, and ſtrong hold in trouble, and that more eſpecially in theſe two great duties: *viz.*

1. Of Fervent Supplication.
2. Of Universal Resignation.

1. Betake your selves to God by fervent Prayer and Supplication. Let me say of these times, as Holy Mr. *Perkins* did of his, *Non sunt ista litigandi, sed orandi tempora*, These are no times for Christians to contend and strive one with another, but with their united cryes to strive with God, and, among other requests, strongly to enforce and follow home, that of *David*, *Psal.* 71. 2, 3. *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape, incline thine ear unto me, and save me, be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort.* That's a true and weighty Observation of *Austine*, *Non facilè inveniuntur præsidia in adversitate, quæ non fuerint in pace quæsita. A refuge is not to be found in trouble, except it be provided before-hand in peace. For this*, saith the Psalmist, *shall every one that is godly, pray unto thee, in a time when thou maist be found, surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him*, Psal. 32. 6. Had not *Noah* prepared and secured himself in the *Ark*, before the floods of great water came, he had not sate, as he did, *Medis tranquillus in undis: Sleeping quietly, when others were perishing in the waters.* Gather your selves therefore together, before the Decree bring forth; seek the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, be more frequent, and more fervent in Prayer, now than ever; you have all the encouragements in the world, to incite you to this duty: the nature of your God is exceeding pitiful, tender, and compassionate, *Jam.* 5. 11. The endeared relations betwixt God and you, gives singular encouragement of success: Shall not God hear his

his own Elect, which cry unto him day and night? *Luk.* 18. 7. The ſweet returns and anſwers of former Prayers, are ſo many motives and encouragements, to follow cloſe that thriving trade, *Pſal.* 52. 1, 2, 3. And above all, your prevalent Advocate in the heavens ſhould encourage you, to come frequently, and boldly, to the throne of Grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace, to help in the time of need, *Heb.* 4. 16. In two things, I ſhall briefly offer a little Direction here: *viz.*

1. As to the matter
2. As to the manner } of Prayer.

1. As to the matter of Prayer, I mean ſuch as the ſtate and condition of the times, now more eſpecially ſuggeſts.

(1.) Unite your Prayers, and cry mightily to the Lord, that if it be his good pleaſure, this cup of wrath which ſeems to be mingled and prepared, may paſs from his people. Now cry to God, as they are directed to do, *Joel* 2. 17. *Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen ſhould rule over them: wherefore ſhould they ſay among the people, Where is their God?* O pray, That *England* may not be delivered into the hands of blood-thirſty *Papiſts*, that the golden Candleſtick may not be removed, that Idolatry may not return into thoſe places where God hath been ſo ſweetly Worſhipped; that a Land ſo peculiarly bleſſed with Goſpel-Light, wherein ſo many thouſand ſons, and daughters, have been born to God, may not at laſt become an *Aceldama*, a great Shambles, to quarter out the Limbs of his dear Saints; that the pleaſant Plant of Reformation, planted with his own right

hand, and watered with ſo many tears, yea with ſo much blood, may not at laſt be rooted up by the wild Boar out of the Forreſt!

(2.) Pray indeſinently, That you may be kept from the ſins and temptations of the times. O watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation; if you cannot prevail with God, to turn away his anger, yet be importunate with him, that you may be kept from ſin, that if you loſe your outward peace, you may be able to keep inward peace, that you may never ſacrifice your conſciences, to ſave your fleſh, that you may never fall under the diſpleaſure of God, to avoid the rage of men. Ah friends, we little think what a fearful havock an hour of temptation will make in ſuch a profeſſing Nation as this is; then ſhall many be offended, *Matth.* 24. 10. O pray, that you may never give offence to others by ſcandal, or take offence your ſelves at the ways of God, whatever ſufferings and ſharp tryals ſhall come.

(3.) Pray earneſtly for the ſanctification of all your troubles, to your eternal good; an unſanctified comfort never did any man good, and a ſanctified trouble never did any man hurt; be more earneſt therefore with God, rather to have your troubles ſanctified, than prevented; to get the bleſſing, than to avoid the ſmart of them; if they cannot be turned away from you, pray they may be turned to your ſalvation.

2. Betake your ſelves to God your refuge by Faith, reſigning and committing all into his hands, *Now the juſt ſhall live by faith, Heb.* 10. 38. The more you can truſt God, the more you ſecure your ſelves from danger; he that can live by *Faith*, ſhall never

ver die by *Fear*, and be ſure to inform your ſelves well in two things, *viz.*

1. What it is to truſt God over all.
2. What grounds you have ſo to do.

1. Be well inſtructed in the Nature of this duty, there are ſix things imported in ſuch acts of Reſignation.

1. An awakened ſenſe of our dangers and hazards. *At what time I am afraid I will truſt in thee*, *Pſal.* 56. 3. Suffering times are reſigning times, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. *Let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their ſouls to him in well doing; as unto a faithful creator.* And the greater and nearer our dangers are, the more frequent and vigorous ſhould the actings of our faith this way be; Be not far from me, for trouble is near.

2. Reſignation to God neceſſarily implies our renunciation, and diſclaiming of all other refuges. Aſhur *ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon horſes neither will we ſay any more to the work of our hands, ye are our Gods, for in thee the fatherleſs findeth mercy*, *Hoſ.* 14. 3. He that relies upon God, muſt ceaſe from Man; reſignation to God excludes not the uſe of lawful means, but it doth exclude dependence upon them.

3. Reſignation to God is always grounded upon an intereſt in God, we have no warrant, nor encouragement to expect protection from him in trouble, except we can come to him as Children to a Father: It is the filial relation that gives encouragement to this fiducial reſignation, and the clearer that relation and intereſt is, the more bold and confident thoſe acts of Faith will be, *Pſal.* 86. 2. *Preſerve my ſoul, for I am holy, O thou my God ſave thy ſervant that truſteth in thee.* And again, *Pſal.* 119. 94. *I am thine, ſave me.* I ſpeak not here of the firſt act

of Faith, which flows not from an intereſt; but gives the Soul an intereſt in God. Nor do I ſay that poor doubting and timorous Believers whoſe intereſt in him is dark and dubious, have no warrant to reſign themſelves and their concernments into his hands, for it is both their right and duty to do it: But certainly the clearer our intereſt is, the more facile and comfortable will thoſe acts be.

4. The committing acts of Faith imply a full acknowledgement and owning of Gods power to protect us, be the danger never ſo imminent, *Pſal.* 31. 15. *My times are in thy hand, deliver me from the hands of mine enemies, and from them that perſecute me. q. d.* O Lord I am fully ſatisfied, my life is not at the diſpoſe of mine enemies, 'tis not in their hands, but in thine; all the traps and ſnares they lay for it ſhall not ſhorten one minute of my time, I know thine hand is fully able to protect me, and therefore into thine hands I reſign my ſelf, and all I have.

5. Reſignation involves in it an expectation of help and ſafety from God, when we ſee no way of ſecurity from men. *O Lord,* ſaith *Jehoſhaphat, We have no might nor no ſtrength, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are unto thee,* 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. So *David, Pſal.* 62. 5, 6. *My ſoul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him, he only is my rock and my ſalvation, he is my defence I ſhall not be moved.*

6. Reſignation to God implies the leaving of our ſelves and our concernments with him to be diſpoſed of according to his good pleaſure; the reſigning Soul deſires the Lord to do with him what he will, and is content to take what lot Divine pleaſure ſhall caſt for him, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25. *And the King ſaid unto* Zadok,

carry

carry back the Ark of God into the city, if I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and ſhew me both it and his habitation; but if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him. And ſo much of the Nature of this Duty, that we may underſtand what to do.

2. Next let me ſhew you what encouragements you that are the people of God, have to this duty, and they will appear to be great and many.

1. The Sovereignty and Abſolute Dominion of God over all Creatures, is a ſingular encouragement to commit our ſelves into his hands and truſt him over all, *Pſal.* 59. 9. *Becauſe of his ſtrength will I wait upon thee, for God is my defence.* If a man were in danger amidſt a great Army of rude and inſolent Souldiers, and were to put himſelf under the protection of any one, it ſhould be the *General* of that Army, to chuſe in ſuch a hand he cannot but be ſafe, all the Souldiers being at his beck. Chriſtian, thy God into whoſe hands thou committeſt thy ſelf, is Lord General of all the Hoſts and Armies in Heaven and Earth; how ſafe muſt thou then be in his hands?

2. The unſearchable and perfect Wiſdom of God is a mighty encouragement to commit our ſelves into his hands, *with him is plenteous redemption, Pſal.* 130. *ult. i. e.* Choice and variety of ways and methods to ſave his people; we are, but God never is at a loſs to find a door for our eſcape, 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.*

3. The infinite tenderneſs and compaſſionateneſs of our God is a ſweet encouragement to reſign and commit our ſelves and all we have into his hands,

his mercy is incomparably tender towards his people, infinitely beyond whatever any creature felt ſtirring in its own bowels towards another that came out of its bowels, *Iſa.* 49. 15. This compaſſion of God engageth the two forementioned Attributes, *viz.* his Power and Wiſdom, for the preſervation and relief of his people: as often as diſtreſſes befall them. Yea,

4. The very diſtreſſes his people are in, do, as it were, awaken the Almighty power of God for their defence and reſcue; our diſtreſſes are not only proper ſeaſons, but powerful motives to his ſaving power, *Deut.* 36. *For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left.* God makes it an argument to himſelf and his people, *Plead it as an argument with him, be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help.*

5. We have already committed greater and weightier concernments into his hand than the deareſt intereſt we have in this World, we have intruſted our ſouls with him, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. 2. *Tim.* 1. 12. Well therefore may we commit the leſſer, who have intruſted the greater with him; what are our lives, liberties, eſtates, and relations, compared with our Souls, and the eternal ſafety and happineſs of them?

6. The committing act of Faith is the great and only expedient to procure and ſecure the peace and tranquillity of our minds, amidſt the diſtractions and troubles of the preſent World; the greateſt part of our affliction and trouble in ſuch days, is from the working of our own thoughts; theſe torments from within are worſe than any from without; and the reſignation of all to God by Faith is their beſt and only cure, *Proverbs* 16. 3. *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.*

bliſhed. A bleſſed calmneſs of mind, a ſweet tranquillity and ſettlement of thoughts follows immediately hereupon, *Pſal.* 94. 19. Oh then, leave all with God, and quietly expect a comfortable iſſue; and for the better ſettlement, and ſecurity of thy peace in times of diſtraction and trouble, I beſeech thee Reader, carefully to watch and guard againſt theſe two evils.

1. *Caution.*

Beware of Infidelity and diſtruſtfulneſs of God and his Promiſes which ſecretly lurks in thy heart, and is hugely apt to bewray it ſelf; when great diſtreſſes and troubles befall thee, thou wilt know it by ſuch Symptomes as theſe. 1. In an over haſty and eager deſire after preſent deliverance, *Iſa.* 51. 14. *The captive exile haſteneth that he may be looſed, and that he ſhould not die in the pit, nor that his bread ſhould fail.* The leſs Faith, always the more impatience, and the more ability to believe, the more patience to wait. 2. It will diſcover it ſelf in our readineſs to cloſe with and catch at ſinful mediums and methods of deliverance, *Iſa.* 30. 15, 16. And this is the handle of temptation and occaſion of Apoſtacy. *But he that believeth will not make haſte, Iſa.* 26. 18. No more haſt than good ſpeed. 3. It will ſhew it ſelf in diſtracting cares and fears about events which will rack the mind with various and endleſs tortures.

2. *Caution.*

Beware of dejection and deſpondency of mind in evil times, take heed of a poor low ſpirit that will preſently ſink and give up its hopes upon every appearance

pearance and face of trouble; it is a promiſe made unto the righteous, *Pſal.* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed truſting in the Lord.* The truſting of God fixes the heart, and the fixing of the heart, fortifies it againſt Fear, but I know what many poor Chriſtians will ſay in this caſe, their timorouſneſs and deſpondency ariſes not ſo much from the greatneſs of outward evils, as from the darkneſs and doubtfulneſs of their Spiritual and inward condition, which doubtleſs is the very truth of the caſe, which brings me to the laſt uſe of this point.

Uſe the Third.

Search and examine your hearts Chriſtians, whether thoſe graces and qualifications to which God hath promiſed protection in evil times may not be found upon an impartial ſearch in your hearts, amongſt which I will ſingle out three principal ones as the proper matters of your ſelf examination, *viz.*

1. Uprightneſs of Heart and Way.
2. Humiliation for your own and others ſins.
3. Righteouſneſs in doing and meekneſs in ſuffering the Will of God.

1. Uprightneſs and Integrity of heart and way. To this qualification belong many ſweet promiſes of protection, ſuch is that *Prov.* 2. 7. *He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly, Pſal.* 7. 10. *My defence is of God, which ſaveth the upright in heart.* If your hearts be true to God, theſe promiſes ſhall be truly performed to you, but beware you deceive not your ſelves in ſo great a point as this is; thy heart cannot be

be an upright heart, except 1. it be a renewed heart; the Natural heart is always a falſe heart, 'tis only regeneration that gives the heart a right temper and frame; all the duties and labours in the world can never keep that heart right in its courſe, which is not firſt ſet right for God by a principle of renovation. (2.) We cannot judge our ſelves upright, except uprightneſs be the ſetled frame and ſtanding bent of our hearts, *Pſal.* 119. 112, 117. It is not our integrity in one or two ſingle actions, but in the general courſe, and complex frame of our lives and ways, that will prove our integrity to God. (3.) Then may we reckon our ſelves upright, when the dread and awe of God's all-ſeeing eye keeps our hearts and ſteps from turning aſide to iniquity, *Gen.* 39. 9. 2 *Cor.* 2. 17. That's a ſincere and upright heart indeed, that finds it ſelf at all times, and in all places overawed from ſin, by the eye of God upon him. (4.) That man's heart alſo is upright with God, who purely aims at and deſigns the glory of God, as the ſcope and end of his life and actions, who lives not to himſelf, neither acts ultimately and principally for himſelf, but lives to God as a perſon dedicated and devoted to him, *Rom.* 14. 7. (5.) That heart alſo is upright with God, which governs it ſelf and its ways by the directions and rules of the Word, *Pſal.* 119. 11, 24, 133. Happy is that ſoul that finds ſuch evidences of integrity in it ſelf, when it is brought to the trial of it at the Bar of the Word, *Heb.* 4. 12. At the bar of conſcience, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. at the bar of afflictions, *Pſal.* 119. 87. and at the bar of ſtrong temptations, *Gen.* 39. 9. The eyes of the Lord ſhall run to and fro through the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of ſuch whoſe hearts are thus perfect towards him.

2. Ano-

2. Another gracious qualification, intitling the ſoul to God's ſpecial protection in the worſt and moſt dangerous times, is the true humiliation for our own and other mens ſins; *Go, ſet a mark*, ſaith God, *upon the foreheads of the men that ſigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midſt thereof*, Ezek. 9. 4. Theſe that thus mourn, when others laugh, ſhall laugh when others mourn. *Lot* was the only mourner in *Sodom*, and he was the only perſon exempted from deſtruction in the ruine and overthrow thereof, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7. That's a ſweet and bleſſed priviledge, mentioned in *Iſa.* 66. 10. *Rejoyce ye with* Jeruſalem, *and be glad with her all ye that love her, rejoyce for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her, that ye may ſuck, and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.* Be contented, Chriſtians, to bear your part in *Sions* groans and ſorrows, you may live to bear your part in her triumphs and ſongs of deliverance; it is an argument of the true publickneſs, and tenderneſs of your ſpirits for preſent, and as ſweet a ſign as can appear upon your ſouls, That you are reſerved for better days.

3. Righteouſneſs in doing, and meekneſs in ſuffering the will of God, is another mark or note, diſtinguiſhing and deſcribing thoſe perſons whom God will preſerve in the evil day. You have both theſe together, in *Zeph.* 2. 3. *Seek ye the Lord, all ye the meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgments, ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs, it may be ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lords anger.* The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their Prayers, 1 *Pet.* 3. 12. If righteouſneſs bring you into danger, the righteous God will

will take care of you in that danger, and bring you out of it. O 'tis a ſingular comfort, when a man can ſay, it was not my ſin, but my duty, that brought me into trouble; this affliction met me in the path and way of my duty; 'tis for thy ſake, O Lord, that I am in trouble: as the *Martyr* that held up the Bible at the ſtake, ſaying, *This hath brought me hither.*

To conclude, Manage all your Sufferings for Chriſt, with Chriſtian meekneſs; as righteouſneſs muſt bring you into them, ſo meekneſs muſt carry you through them: if you avenge your ſelves, you take the cauſe out of God's hand, into your own, but the meek Chriſtian leaves it to the Lord; and ſhall never have cauſe to repent of his ſo doing. If thou have an upright heart with God, a tender and mournful heart for ſin, and thou ſuffer with meekneſs, for righteouſneſs ſake, thou art one of theſe ſouls to whom that ſweet Voice is directed in my Text,

Come, my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee; hide thy ſelf, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be over-paſt.

FINIS.

Mr. *Flavell*'s Two Treatiſes, { 1. *A Teatiſe of Fear.*
2. *The Righteous Man's Refuge.*